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the ALTERNATIVE

F. Scott Fitzgerald's Ten-Year Party

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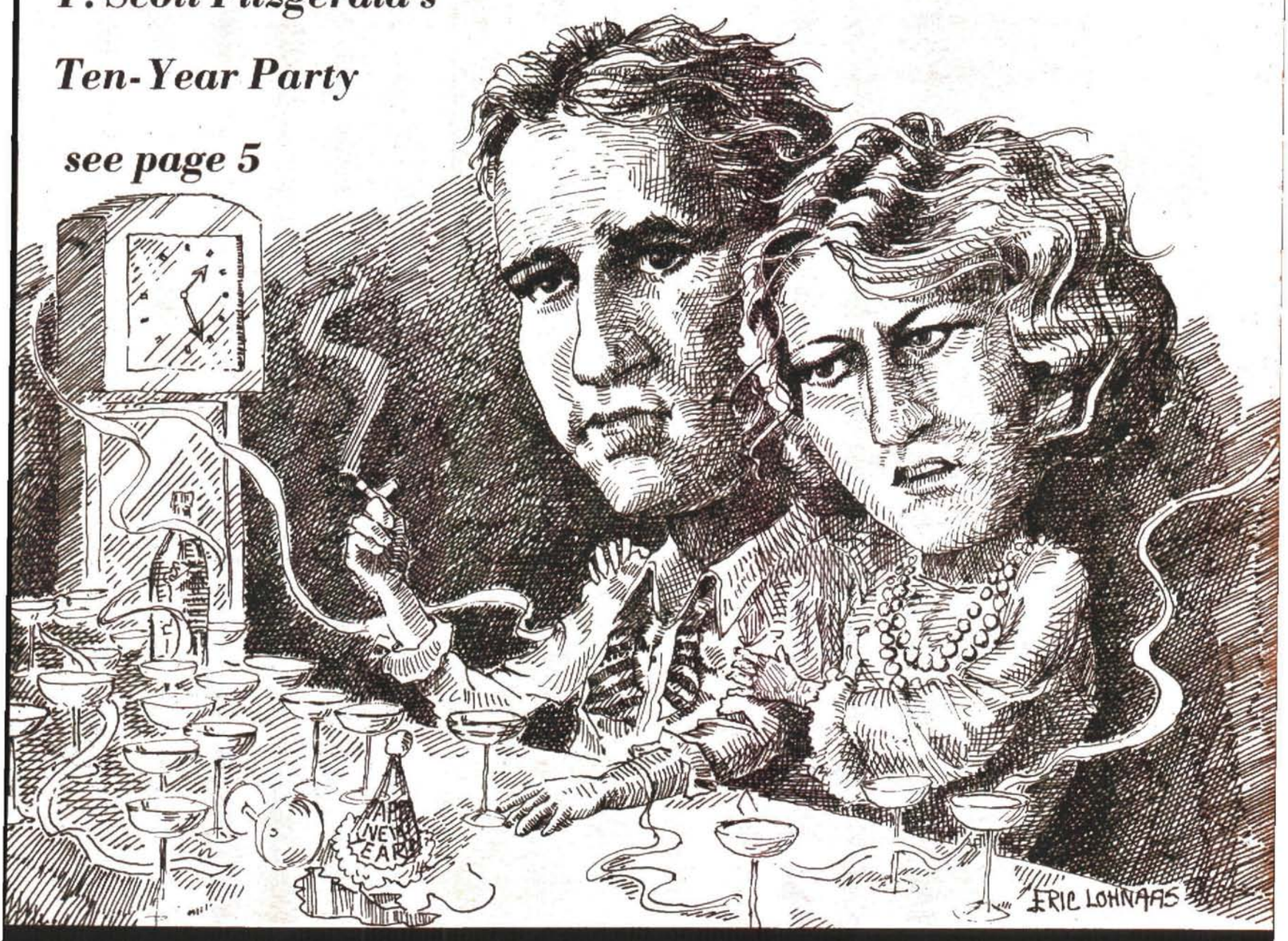

Hugh Kenner
on the Lost Generation

John Chamberlain on H.L. Mencken

Max Geltman:
One Year in the Twenties

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the ALTERNATIVE to bare the witness and the truth

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Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed, or (mu redundantly of all) national origin—and yes, sex, even sex.

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☆The Continuing Crisis☆

● December, the month in which Christ's birth is commemorated, was also the month in which Representative Gerald R. Ford was raised to the vice-presidency, a position he actually seems to have yearned for. But as to who planned the gaudy Capitol Hill ceremony wherein he was anointed, no one is saying, though there were hints that an anonymous dignitary from one of the various central African democracies had a hand in it.

● The extraordinary assembly abounded with solons, justices, famous faces from the media, and the President himself. The flavor of the affair was embalmed for all history in the Vice President's stunning address which began, "I am a Ford not a Lincoln. . ." and climbed anon to even more grandiose heights.

● Senator William Proxmire, Wisconsin's twice-mugged Senator, suffered disaster when he slipped on ice while jogging to work. His surgically beautified face was bruised, and his esteem for physical fitness was so shaken he may take up needlepoint. In Boston, Mr. Mordecai Swell survived an extended ordeal in one of the world's largest commercial popcorn poppers. Buttered and salted, Mr. Swell dragged himself from a cylinder containing two acres of popcorn and cheerfully collected his one-hundred dollar bet. Congratulations Mr. Swell!

● Once again glad tidings arrive from Zaire where President Mobuto Sese Seko boosted that progressive republic's civil rights movement by decreeing that Batswa tribesmen (internationally known as Pygmies) are now free to serve in the armed forces. As Zaire comprises most of what was once called the Belgian Congo, there was some alarm at the United Nations when Mr. Seko announced that "Foreigners should know that from today onward there are no more pygmies in Zaire. . . ." But Mr. Seko relieved international apprehensions in a clarifying statement, noting that by "no more pygmies" he merely meant that the erstwhile pygmies are now to be called Batswanese. Engines of free enterprise fired up in lovely Kuala Lumpur where a bounty was put on rats—local specialists in the healing professions had been mixing the critters into their valued elixirs.

● Having spent nearly seventeen years defusing him, authorities finally released Mr. George Metesky, "the famed Mad Bomber," at an austere ceremony in Queens, New York. Though he has been declared "harmless" and even mellow, there apparently is still enough interest in him for him to launch a college lecture tour sometime this spring. Increased fuel prices and lowered speed limits prompted unruly behavior from truckers across the nation, as the Administration suggested still more humorous nostrums for the energy crisis. But by the month's end, that crisis was mollified by the surprising news that the government had exaggerated shortages and by the unsurprising news that the Arabs had forgotten that Hawaii was part of the United States and so had continued to ship oil to that astonishingly thirsty isle. The Supreme Court decided that police can search those they arrest so long as the arrest is lawful and the suspect is ultimately booked.

● In response to what he termed a "national epidemic" of crank telephone calls, the noted publisher, Baron Von Kannon, announced plans to begin the nation's first professional crank answering service, centered in New York City. In a December 14th press conference held at Manhattan's Three Dollars The Night Hotel, the innovative young publisher announced that all crank answers will be copyrighted and "refreshingly crazy," having been composed by "twenty-three certified lunatics." He was quick to state that none will be "obscene or sexy in any way," though he admitted "there will be a lot of heavy breathing and even more panting."

● Representative William Alexander (D-

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Editorial

America in the Mulligrubs

During this extended season of presidential agonies the most riveting realization for me has been that not one of the protagonists in the Watergate Spectacle and its concomitant amusements has performed with distinction. To be sure the ignominy of the Administration's behavior has taken on an aura of grandeur as each new botch surpasses its predecessor in tawdriness, slovenliness, and arrant stupidity. But what is also bracing is the low-grade performance of those supposedly disinterested worthies who, as they say, are merely trying to get at the bottom of things.

Senator Ervin has become an annoying gas bag and a showboat to boot. Last summer he gravely pronounced the greatest national crisis in the history of the Republic at hand, and then waddled off to spend the next few weeks lounging, fishing in the wilds, and posing for photographs. Judge Sirica has shown just how far one can get in this country while remaining a pristine slob. The vast majority of Democrats have revealed themselves as a low mob of sharpsters and shysters, with no more appetite for governing a democratic republic than for putting in an honest day's work. And the pundits continue their generally preposterous act. Through it all not more than a few drops of intelligent commentary have appeared to stain the historical record, and the producers of these uncommon stains remain unknown to the national audience. The clod mentality rolls on!

The reason that so few people have anything intelligent to say about the nation's present state of abasement is that never in its history, at least never in its constitutional history, has America been sunk into precisely this kind of mess. America has suffered constitutional imbroglio, economic catastrophe, and social upheaval. For almost two hundred years America has been a political experiment played out in the booming towns of a land only recently claimed from the wilderness. This roaring pageant took place during a time of unmatched technological revolution, which America often led, and of international political discontinuity, which America influenced crucially. Still the bizarre politics of 1973 are unique.

Neither recent experience nor tradition illuminates them. They stand at a historical confluence whose diverse streams must be sorted out not by Washington's sedentary journalists but by scholars and not by tin-pot politicians but by statesmen. Unfortunately, there are no statesmen at hand and the scholars are generally off campaigning and erecting soap boxes. So in 1973 America was going it alone, uninformed by sober intellects and unaided by wise leadership. If the gorgeous spectacle of Washington politics and public discourse have not evoked a very satisfying commentary from the journalists or a very intelligent policy from the practicing Machiavellis, it should come as no surprise Still if one reaches far enough one will find an episode similar to our present agonies. But to get to it one must travel back beyond the Civil War, beyond the Founding Fathers, to that dim but tumultuous century before the Revolution when the various state legislatures snarled at royal governors who were inept and unwanted. The parallels are intriguing and I, at least, find them instructive.

During the century prior to the Revolution the realities of political life were wildly at variance with popular perceptions, not an unusual situation of course, but a situation conducing to as much confusion in those days as in our own time. The colonists thought of themselves as living under a governmental system essentially the same as that of the mother country. That is to say, they prided themselves in being governed by a constitution peculiar to all the world because of its assurances of freedom and dignity and because of its ingenious construction. It was a constitution which blended power amongst the monarch, the aristocracy, and the commoners. It was called a mixed system, and under it Englishmen prospered.

Unfortunately the colonists' perceptions of this mixed system and of their own system embraced several fateful misconceptions, the most crucial of which was the extent to which power really was mixed in England. Contrary to contemporary wisdom, the monarch actually held prepotency over Parliament by virtue of his subtle use of various forms of informal influence. Then again, the British Opposition press, whose values and rhetoric the colonists avidly imitated, was responding to social and political conditions much different from those of the newly settled colonies. These misperceptions eventuated in grave political consequences for the colonists. In time, social anxieties combined with political anxieties, eliciting a syndrome of extreme reactions both from the royal governor and from the colonial opposition—a syndrome which strikes me as prefigurative of our present political ax fight.

Stated briefly, the American colonial system presented an incendiary paradox in which the royal governors, though actually feeble and unsteady, were perceived by the colonists as powerful and menacing. The result was a long period of ferocious feuding, which prevented normal political relations, political stability, and moderate leadership—eventually the colonial government gave up the ghost. Though the colonial governors possessed awesome formal powers, they lacked the kind of informal powers that would have allowed them influence over the unstable politics of the time. What is more the very breadth of their powers frightened the already untoward colonial legislatures and intensified hostilities in a land that was already grievously afflicted with the kind of discord that is natural to a country undergoing dramatic growth and social change. Political factionalism became arabesque, and there followed an intemperate politics obsessed with conspiracy, corruption, tyranny, and sedition. Imprudence characterized both sides. While the colonial legislators and pundits delusively articulated the values and apprehensions that were the everyday stock and trade of England's Opposition press, the royal governors panicked, spoke of sedition, and hurried the conflict along. I cannot see how this paradoxical condition differs vastly from our own.

To begin with American society today is critically unstable. I realize that many soothsayers like to stress the opposite, but all that they seem to be saying is that after a decade of SDS, Black Panthers, and itinerant bombers, we are still a step ahead of the commissars or the storm troopers. Nevertheless over a very short period of time America has changed dramatically and many significant changes appear inscrutable, contradictory, and illogical. In fact, most changes in America seem to take place in spite of logic and intelligence. At this very moment legislation might well be in the hopper to make Judge Sirica a national shrine or to enfranchise the whooping crane. If the Cardinal of New York gave birth to a six-pound baby girl tomorrow, I would not be surprised. There is no way of knowing if this period of change has ended or how it will finally end. On some issues the will of the people does not seem to matter. In other areas their will is ambiguous. All of this unstable change has been in the cards for years. America has experienced extraordinary growth; there have always been grave contradictions in America's regnant philosophy, liberalism, and recently tensions have grown critical.

Simultaneous with a pervasive loss of faith in traditional American liberal values, America was inflicted with an unparalleled expansion of its youth cohort. Today the American population contains a larger proportion of young people than ever before, and with due respect for the carcass of Dr. Charles Reich, persons under thirty are the primary source of practically every social problem known to man including excessive giddiness, mawkishness, and acne. No one should be surprised that America in the sixties experienced high rates of crime, unemployment, improvidence, and so forth. American liberalism's loss of confidence combined with this multiplicity of social disturbances to make inescapable the extreme changes that have so mysteriously oozed into our lives.

Then, too, there have been political and governmental instabilities. Politically the parties are in disarray. The Republican Party is weak at the polls and has been made weaker by its thralldom to the present administration. The Democratic Party is fraught with contradictions and sorely afflicted by that crowd of mountebanks whose views are as silly as anything ever dreamed up in a Greenwich Village

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The Business of America

by Lindley H. Clark Jr.

The Lessons of Free Enterprise (IV)

What follows is the last of four columns by the economic news editor of the Wall Street Journal *on the practice of business in America.*

In recent years many college students have taken a dim view of U.S. business—sometimes of specific corporations, but often of corporations generally.

Let's start off by saying that some companies deserved all or at least most of the criticism they got. The electrical equipment companies started the 1960s by giving themselves and other corporations a bad name; they combined among themselves to divide the market at a noncompetitive price and, in the process, to defraud millions of customers and stockholders of utilities all around the land.

More recently there has been International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, with its well-publicized efforts to influence politics both abroad and at home. The corporations that have lamely admitted to making illegal contributions to President Nixon's reelection campaign haven't helped their own reputations any more than they have helped the Republicans'.

That much being said, what can the right-thinking college student do about it? Should all of the worried students go to work for nonprofit foundations, welfare organizations, universities, and other—to use that wretched word—eleemosynary institutions? Such institutions do indeed need the services of many dedicated individuals, and a lot of brighter young Americans are accepting and will accept the challenge.

The chief trouble with that solution, though, is that what will often answer for the individual cannot work for everybody. Colleges and universities, notably, now often have more teachers than they need.

The eleemosynary industry, moreover, is not self-supporting. It needs giant infusions of money from charitable outsiders. Most of those charitable outsiders have derived their money from business enterprise—either directly or by inheritance. The inescapable fact is simply that business is what makes everything—good, bad, or indifferent—go.

So if college graduates want to get this country moving in directions that they would like to see it go, some of them are going to have to enlist in business enterprise. All of them, in business or not, are going to have to try to be informed members of the body politic, which after all sets the rules that govern much of the way business operates.

In a way the electrical equipment case showed that the rules do work. Some businessmen actually went to jail for conspiring to fix prices. The president of one company recently lost his job soon after revealing that he had approved an illegal campaign contribution. Citizens still are capable of righteous indignation, and such indignation can and has moved politicians to shore up the rules where they need it.

Students who do go to work for business will find that not all corporate executives laugh at the rules or even simple ethics. Business enterprise is not a church with a dogma that dictates the ideas and actions of all who work for it.

The corporation is an artificial person with no attitudes of its own. Its ideas are constantly being shaped and reshaped by the people who run the enterprise. Whoever those people are now, new people will replace them before long; unlike the corporation, man still is mortal. What the corporation is ten or twenty years in the future will depend in large part on the caliber of people it is able to enlist now.

If a corporation breaks the rules or otherwise performs badly, it can be punished in the market place, too. Collegiate criticism of corporations has caused self-criticism within the companies—and stirred broad criticism from the general public. A corporation needs public support, or at least acceptance, if it is to continue to sell its stock, its products, and its services.

If anyone needs evidence that the business system can change under public pressure, he only has to examine U.S. business history. In the nineteenth century it was considered entirely proper to send ten-year-olds to toil in factories. Under pressure from the public, governments now provide near-universal schooling, a system still unequaled in the world. Ethics and rules changed because the public insisted that they change.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the so-called robber barons operated pretty much as they pleased in the nation's major industries. Not everyone thought that this was a great idea, but there was no political majority to call a halt. Then, finally, a majority began to evolve. The Sherman Antitrust Act went on the books in 1890; when it proved ineffective, other laws were written to supplement it. Suddenly politicians such as Teddy Roosevelt found they could build a following by campaigning against the "trusts."

Not all of the impulse for change came from outside the corporations, either. The original Henry Ford was hailed as a philanthropist in some quarters (and reviled as one by some competitors) when he offered workers higher wages than they could get elsewhere. What Henry saw, much more clearly than his competitors did, was that high wages drew the best and most efficient employees. All of the publicity didn't hurt the sales of Ford cars either.

Henry, moreover, could have sold a lot of those Ford cars for higher prices than he chose to charge. But he saw also that if he held his prices down he could sell a lot more. With high wages (relatively) and low prices he drove the Tin Lizzie to dominance in the fledgling auto market.

The Ford Corporation, however, had no patent on dominance. It was only as effective as the people who ran it, and soon some of Henry's competitors began to operate more effectively than he did. Whenever a business' ideas and actions harden into dogma they are likely to begin to lose out to the competition.

Obviously, no business corporation can guarantee a new employee a career of matching wits with a Henry Ford. Business enterprise offers a multiplicity of jobs, and many of them—at least at the start—are highly routine. The country keeps moving because, fortunately, some people want such jobs.

We organize our lives differently. To some a job is only the means to support nonwork activities that we enjoy. To others the job can be central and other activities peripheral.

The corporation of itself is neither evil or good; its morality stems from the people involved. Free enterprise simply has shown itself to be a highly efficient way to organize the nation's resources of manpower and materials to produce the products and services that the public wants.

Free enterprise is not inherently any more moral than truly democratic socialism. If the state controls all the means of production and organizes them as a democratic majority dictates, that's as "moral" as free enterprise. Of course, in many of the so-called socialist democracies that's not the way it works at all; government becomes self-perpetuating and dictatorial.

The record would seem to indicate that relatively free enterprise works better than any form of socialism. Americans, at any rate, have used it to gain the world's highest material living standard. "Material things," to be sure, are not all that matter. And even in the area of material things, it surely is true that some of us have much more than others. But if business enterprise does a good job of generating the wealth, the body politic can do as it pleases about the distribution of the wealth.

It has moved a long way in that direction already, not always wisely. But a democracy is not always wise; if it is to survive, it continues to try to correct its mistakes. One of its recent mistakes was to decide that wage-price controls could produce economic stability.

If such mistakes are to be corrected, business will need college graduates, both as present critics and as future policy makers. If America is to continue to grow in health, its business, as President Coolidge said, will continue to be business. □

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the ALTERNATIVE

Neil Howe

Fitzgerald and the American Dream

Then they were in an elevator bound skyward.
"What floor, please?" said the elevator man.
"Any floor," said Mr. In.
"Top floor," said Mr. Out.
"This is the top floor," said the elevator man.
"Have another floor put in," said Mr. Out.
"Higher," said Mr. In.
"Heaven," said Mr. Out.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald
"May Day" (1922)

We have come nearly full circle in our reexamination of America's most celebrated fraternity of writers, that scattering of prodigies—Hemingway, Faulkner, Wolfe, Dos Passos, and Fitzgerald among them—born between 1894 and 1900. Gertrude Stein, that crusty Victorian, called them a "lost" generation. She and the audacious readers of the twenties delighted in their fashionable nihilism and in what was thought to be their alienation from their native culture. Later, opinions would change. As the beliefs of these writers were discovered and appreciated, the writers themselves came to be regarded as the clearest exponents of what that native, "patriate" culture is all about. According to Malcolm Cowley, who formally closed the circle on Miss Stein a couple of years ago, they weren't a "lost" but a "lucky" generation. They had all the advantages of a nineteenth-century upbringing—a civilizing education, an unambiguous moral code, a close neighborhood and family—and of a twentieth-century adulthood blessed by the new cosmopolitanism of America which gave their talents freedom to develop. From these fortuitous circumstances came not rebels, but artists who preserved the foundation of belief upon which twentieth-century America was built.

I

We can expect that Fitzgerald will benefit most from this shift in critical perspective. Fitzgerald believed that the everlasting reality of American life is the American Dream, and no theme is so universal in his writing as the consequences of pursuing and enjoying that dream. According to the rules of his world, everyone was drawn forward by visions of unutterable splendor—everyone, from God, who (explains Maury Noble in *The Beautiful and the Damned*) inspired the Bible so that millions might adore Him, to the illiterate soldiers of "May Day" returning from Europe imagining triumphal arches and garlanded virgins. Fitzgerald portrayed his era as one of unlimited possibilities. As such, he suggested that not only were these "lucky" times for writers, but lucky times for the Republic, which was then old enough to be affluent and young enough so that people could use affluence to ennoble or degrade themselves as they wished. They were times of confidence and enthusiasm when men and women, if they weren't capable of the loftiest ideals, made cruder pursuits seem just as lovely with occasionally tragic results. Yet our emerging appreciation of this theme is largely a matter of hindsight. Everyone concedes that Fitzgerald is distinctively "American" in the sense that foreign readers rate him far lower relative to, say, Faulkner than do American readers. Most of us also go along with Cowley's observation that "the handle by which he took hold of the characters was their dreams." But beyond this point, our view is muddled. Because of two grievous historical misfortunes, we still hesitate to consider Fitzgerald for what he is: the great, native expositor of our own collective fantasy.

Fitzgerald's first misfortune was that the most productive period of his life coincided —sympathetically, or so it seemed—with the 1920–1930 decade. When he wrote that "the twenties" were themselves an era, "lasting almost exactly ten years," beginning with the May Day riots of 1919 and "leaping to a spectacular death in October 1929," he might just as well have been describing his own career. Fitzgerald's first and best-selling novel, *This Side of Paradise*, was accepted by Max Perkins at Scribners in September 1919. During the ten subsequent boom years, he produced the bulk of what ensuing generations have remembered him by. With the Great Crash, Fitzgerald's career and his life began to fall apart. Thus it was easy for antagonistic critics to argue—and this argument stuck —that Fitzgerald said nothing essential about the American character, least of all the American Dream, but that he merely glorified the vulgarity of a peculiar era in American history and then was gone. Plummeting readership, emotional "exhaustion," his wife's insanity, and chronic drinking rushed him to an early death in 1940. In that last decade he wrote little first-rate fiction, except to finish *Tender is the Night*, which was based on his early European revelries. Personal embarrassments such as *The Crack-Up* further fueled hostile fires.

Critics have rarely admitted the ideological undertow of this judgment, though they have complained that Fitzgerald was an accomplice to what "went wrong" in the twenties. Fitzgerald, it is said, helped fool America. He wrote about bobbed hair and debutantes while the poor got poorer, the rich got richer, and capitalism collapsed under its own surfeit. In the thirties, when America roared off to a New Deal and new dreams, which doubtless Fitzgerald understood less well, he was blamed for social blindness and thus for immaturity. His personal dissolution became a sort of exemplum of the woes of the higher-than-proletarian classes. In an essay entitled "You Can't Duck a Hurricane under a Beach Umbrella," Philip Rahv wrote in 1934 that Fitzgerald himself "was swept away by the waste and extravagence of the people he described, and he identified with them. . . . In these days . . . Fitzgerald cannot escape realizing how near the collapse of his class really is."

Surprisingly, time has not erased this animosity for the twenties as an historical idea. As late as 1959 Morison and Commager, summing up the concensus, remarked: "If we may use a moralistic term . . . the mark of failure is heavy on those years: failure in terms of responsibilities evaded, and of opportunities missed." It was Fitzgerald's bad luck not to have foreseen this "moralistic term"—which meant, to later readers, that the only respectable literary relationship to the twenties would

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be an outward show of detachment. Today we have difficulty establishing sympathy with his protagonists' world simply because of its twentyishness; and without that sympathy we find their lives "doomed" (in the words of Midge Decter) "not so much because he dignified their illusions but because the illusions he dignified were so cheap."

Fitzgerald's second misfortune was a matter of literary temperament: Fitzgerald was a romantic writer of what was known as the "social novel" or the "novel of manners,"—genres which in this country have been requisitioned by naturalists and realists ever since the Civil War. Nowhere in the literary world, in fact, do we demand such intellectual discipline as in fiction about society. At best this has yielded a classic subordination of character and plot to form. At worst it has swamped us with cheap naturalism, where social theory is forced onto plot, and where genuine emotion is extinguished. Fitzgerald's method was utterly different, so different that few readers or critics in his time understood it. Fitzgerald would begin with the concrete bits of his era—songs, car grills, street lamps, skyscrapers, dance steps—and then infuse them with the passions that adhere to them, that attract or repel, that make them beautiful or ugly. Amory Blaine, the Romantic Egotist (as Fitzgerald wanted to title his first novel) was a natural "pagan," to whom the American Dream was a million disconnected things, all of them surprises. What Fitzgerald gained in immediacy he lost in coherence for that staid tradition of Howells and James and Dreiser. Outlandish fantasies, lopsided plots, and pretentious dialogue dissuaded most attempts to take Fitzgerald seriously as an artist. "I have said that *This Side of Paradise* commits almost every sin that a novel can commit," wrote Edmund Wilson reviewing his friend's novel, "but it does not commit the unpardonable sin: it does not fail to live." That this was intended primarily as criticism rather than praise says something about the distinctly nonromantic standards by which Fitzgerald has been judged.

Since our first serious reexamination of Fitzgerald in the early fifties, critics seeking to raise his reputation have committed enormous mistakes by ignoring this essential romanticism. Invariably, they overrate Fitzgerald's gift of prophecy, his moral vision of the times, and they exaggerate the somber and the tragic—when it is precisely the tragic moments, as Fitzgerald himself admits in *The Beautiful and the Damned*, which he had a tendency to mishandle. In setting forth the American Dream, Fitzgerald does not—as some have suggested—transform it via critique into the American Failure. Romanticism does not destroy illusion, it exploits illusion; it offers not a moral vision, but an aesthetic vision. Hawthorne, Fitzgerald's closest romantic and American counterpart, would have understood. His prison-door and the child Pearl coexist, irreconcilable bipoles of the Puritan "Utopia," just as West Egg's "valley of the ashes" and Gatsby's green light, the exhausted dream and the promised dream are inevitable extremes of the Industrial Age. ("Gatsby turned out all right in the end," insists Nick Carraway. He had nothing to do with "what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams. . . .") As for Fitzgerald the man, there was too much enthusiasm for conscious irony to get even a foothold. What sober reflection do we expect from a man who summed up the twenties as "the greatest, gaudiest spree in history," whose wife compares their first trip to New York to "small children in a great bright unexplored barn," who saw their life together "just like blowing bubbles—they burst, but more bubbles just as beautiful can be blown—and burst—till the soap and water are gone—and that's the way we'll be, I guess"?

II

Yet what were misfortunes to Fitzgerald's reputation were also responsible for the startling originality of his American Dream, for his exclusive emphasis on its guises, rather than its goals, on style rather than substance. The twenties may now be buried under the black crepe of failure—and Fitzgerald with them—but while they lasted they provided Fitzgerald a temporarily fixed pattern of social and political mores and fantastic human energy yearning to excel. They were times when nearly everyone clung proudly to his step on the hierarchy, be it as provincial as the KKK, boorish as the Rotary, exclusive as the Boston Society, and when nearly everyone struggled madly to climb upwards. The rules were arbitrary, but no matter. "History is bunk," declared Henry Ford in 1919—and so were Wilsonian notions of improving the rules of history. The twenties freed Fitzgerald entirely from the task of judging the worth of the American Dream (a task at which he would surely have failed). They set before him a society untroubled by any grave moral decision—except how best to succeed.

The twenties suggested to Fitzgerald such grand and whimsical ambitions that his characters seem one-dimensional yet alive by today's standards. Tyro Amory Blaine burns to grow up and be philosopher-tycoon-athlete-artist; Maury Noble, reclining in his overstuffed divan, avers that he "wants to become immensely rich as quickly as possible"; asked if he has any plans about himself, Dick Diver answers, "I've only got one, Franz, and that's to be a good psychologist—maybe the greatest one that ever lived," to which Franz, befuddled, says, "that's very good—and very American." In this respect they were all extensions of Fitzgerald himself, who once told Wilson: "I want to be the greatest writer ever, don't you?" The dream was distinct, the will was distinct, and as America began to overflow with affluence, Fitzgerald could record the weird romantic perversities that occur when the will, having achieved the dream, tries to escape inside it. Again and again the fairy-tale ending explodes. The "successful" couples plunge into endless bickering and competition, become restless, give in to misunderstood passions, grow suicidal, and finally destroy either themselves or the illusion they once had of themselves. Unlike Dos Passos, Fitzgerald suffuses this quest for the American Dream with a childlike innocence which was also characteristic of the age. Cities grew, roads spread, and the price of stocks and land soared. But not only did we fail to ask whether such growth could be genuinely sustained, we also failed to question whether wealth brought happiness. It was the spirit of Babylon, and Fitzgerald himself only half-doubted it. In 1923 he wrote of upper-class scions dissipating in booze and brawls. By 1930, the same could be written about him.

Social distinction was and is the most important ingredient of the American Dream. Man is a social animal—or so Fitzgerald believed. He likes to be popular, to be admired, to be magnanimous with some and cruel to others. We know that Fitzgerald's personal life was marked by an extraordinary attention to social status. Fitzgerald's letters, reveals biographer Andrew Turnbull, overflow with systematic listings of his strengths and weaknesses as others saw them. And Fitzgerald learned early the cruel law of charisma: the more you sweat and work to achieve social heights, the phonier you seem. The secret is to be casual, to pay assiduous attention to your mannerisms without seeming to pay attention at all.

At Princeton (records Fitzgerald in *This Side of Paradise*) this was the difference between "the Slicker" ("Dresses well. Pretends that dress is superficial—but knows it isn't. . . . Goes into activities he can shine in . . . Hair slicked") and "the Big Man" (". . . thinks dress is superficial, and is inclined to be careless about it . . . Goes out for everything from a sense of duty . . . Hair not slicked"). This was also the difference between being condescendingly sociable (joining just the "right" clubs and not too many), and—poor wretch who tried!—"running it out," being too eagerly sociable. Of course, no one "runs it out" on such a grandiose scale as Gatsby—that grown-up Oxford college boy who never could learn how to say "old chap" with the right inflection. Gatsby holds enormous, raucous parties but can't attract the "right" people (Daisy's friends). His diary shows that as a boy he dedicated an hour a day to "lifting weights," but he just can't achieve that "body capable of enormous leverage" of Tom Buchanan (Daisy's husband). He amasses great sums of money through questionable enterprises, but it causes him to have that visage that "looks as though he had just killed a man"—and so turns Daisy away. Buchanan has but one attribute, and with it he keeps Daisy—this is what Fitzgerald describes as a "vast carelessness" that comes only with growing up rich, with not being an *arriviste* like Gatsby. It's unfair. It's the inexorable working of the American Dream. Like Nick Carraway and no doubt Fitzgerald, we sympathize with Gatsby: "You're better than all the rest of them put together."

Fitzgerald's refreshing honesty in portraying man-in-society was responsible for the smashing initial success of his novels, and it reflected a new drift in those postwar years—away from notions of individual duty and social fairness (Woodrow Wilson, in advocating that ivy league colleges disband the clubs' cruel initiation ceremonies, was fighting a losing battle), and toward a frank awareness of our multifarious, half-conscious ties to social vanity. Fitzgerald was acutely aware of our tendency to worship heroes, to be infatuated with men who hold sway over others by some nameless quality in their demeanor. When Fitzgerald was nine, he records that he "fell

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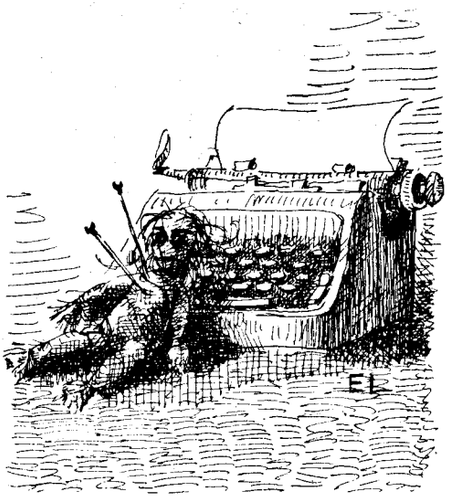
madly into admiration for a boy who played basketball with melancholy defiance." Twenty years later, facing the Arc de Triomphe, he told of his admiration for Napoleon. The modern reader finds Nietzsche lurking in the dark corners of his fiction, alongside characters whose social or racial chauvinism lacks any irony whatsoever. But we also have the realistic sense that much of his characters' discussion of "their own" ideas and feelings is all pretense—witty lines to make others think them intelligent or funny. Fitzgerald doesn't condemn it; it's simply the way he sees Americans act. When Maury Noble (modeled on George Jean Nathan) rambles on about metaphysics behind a train depot at 3:00 A. M., no one listening cares about Pythagoras, though they bathe gloriously in his charm.

Thus, there are no Arrowsmiths in Fitzgerald's fiction—no principled individuals taking stands against society—and had Fitzgerald written a novel about war, there would have been no Frederic Henrys. The Great War never had the same singular and profound impact on Fitzgerald as it had on so many other writers of the twenties. To Hemingway, cummings, and Dos Passos, the war was a macro-symbol of disillusionment, an embodiment of what they had learned by painful *rites de passage*: that idealism in the abstract is death itself, and that the immediate, the particular, the experienced are all there is left and so must be trusted. "Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and dates"—this, in Hemingway's words, became the theme of a whole new genre, the disillusionment-war novel. Fitzgerald shared this preoccupation with the immediate, which is (as John Aldridge has pointed out) the business of youth. Fitzgerald echoed with the rest in *This Side of Paradise* that his generation "awoke to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken." Yet when it came time to decide what new elemental standards were to be chosen, most of Fitzgerald's contemporaries opted for private, personal codes that would later gain respectability in the existentialist flowering in Europe, which would in fact grow in popularity throughout this century. The popularity of Fitzgerald's preference, on the other hand, was doomed to die with the expiring of the decade.

He expressed vague intellectual disapproval of wars, of course, but he felt the nagging suspicion that men would continue to fight them, not for lofty moral reasons, but because men secretly enjoyed donning the trappings of rank and distinction and shining for their friends in heroic disregard for death. Turnbull writes that Fitzgerald, "to his everlasting regret," just missed serving action as an officer (the war ended as his regiment was boarding ship). Dick Diver, guiding his entourage in 1920 around the scarred battlefields of France, exclaims, "Why, this was a love-battle—there was a century of middle-class love spent here. . . . You had to have the whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancee, and little cafes in Valence. . . . All my beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up here with a gust of highly explosive love." The Great War may be an aberration, but surely war itself is as perennial as love. Fitzgerald understood something about Hemingway that perhaps Hemingway himself did not understand: that peculiar emotion that drove Fitzgerald and Hemingway and a whole generation willingly, even gladly, to suicide before the machine-gun. Fitzgerald's viewpoint may have been the most realistic after all. The western world did have more wars to fight.

An essential ingredient of the American Dream, of course, is wealth, and in the manner of his age, Fitzgerald profoundly understood the effects of wealth. "Let me tell you about the very rich," he wrote in the prologue to "The Rich Boy." "They are different from you and me. . . ." To which Hemingway scornfully answered, "Sure, they have more money." For decades America thought that Hemingway got the better in this exchange. Strip away that mystical pyramid-order from society, learned men of the thirties counseled, and the fundamental equality of men would



manifest itself. Today, after repeated attempts to dissolve that pyramid, perhaps America has second thoughts. Possession of money, we have found, is the simplest and easiest part of being rich: it's no more difficult for us to reallocate wealth collectively than it was for Gatsby to amass it alone. But how we spend it, alas, is what makes us unequal. To be rich, Fitzgerald stresses, is to possess a quality that allows one to create splendors rather than monstrosities. Middle-class Rosemary shopping in Paris cannot help but notice that Nicole, the descendant of a long line of American tycoons, "bought all these things not a bit like a high-class courtesan buying underwear and jewels, which were after all professional equipment and insurance—but with an entirely different point of view. . . . She illustrated very simple principles . . . so accurately that there was *grace* in the procedure."

III

In the early twenties, Fitzgerald was an aristocratic—romantic island in a literary world still awash with Zola, Spencer, and Progressivism. It meant he stood little chance of being welcomed by critics in his lifetime. It also meant no other great writer in this century would attempt his theme: the American Dream as a value-free contrast between a linear, ebullient idealism—lovely to contemplate, attracting to itself every romantic metaphor ever written—and a vulgar, pragmatic, unself-conscious manner of Americans pursuing that dream. His sensibilities, like those of most romantics, were divided into seemingly disconnected realms. Malcolm Cowley writes: "It was as if all his fiction described a big dance to which he had taken, as he once wrote, the prettiest girl . . . and as if he had stood at the same time outside the ballroom, a little midwestern boy with his nose to the glass wondering how much the tickets cost and who paid for the music." From his mother's side came the subtle tutoring of one of the oldest and (formerly) richest families in St. Paul; from his father came the embarrassment of failure; the Jazz Age, he said, "bore him up, flattered him, and gave him more money than he had dreamed of, simply for telling people that he felt as they did"; later he said that his political position was always "pretty left." He had a double vision—a postwar vision that saw everything getting bigger and rosier, and a prewar vision that augured the awful collapse of the whole show.

Fitzgerald possessed perhaps the purest aesthetic intuition of any American writer. He could easily slough off the instinct to make moral judgments (far too easily, many have said) in order to escape into glorified detail. He had a politician's faculty for measuring nuances of character—of the way people dressed, talked, emoted—and he had an electric sympathy for the causes of their restlessness. From early childhood, his intelligence expressed itself not in analysis but in wit, not in explanation but in poetic compression. He would sum up the American character in a single fact. "With Americans ordering suits by the gross in London," he writes in passing, "the Bond Street tailors perforce agreed to moderate their cut to the American long-waisted figure and loose-fitting taste, something subtle passed to America, the style of man."

Almost by the week Fitzgerald measured the fads of America. As Cowley remembers it, "his room was full of calendars and clocks." Returning from Europe to New York in 1926, he could sense ominous changes though he had been away only two years: "The restlessness . . . approached hysteria. The parties were bigger. . . . The pace was faster . . . The shows were broader, the buildings were higher, the morals were looser, and the liquor was cheaper; but all these did not really minister to much delight. Young people wore out early—they were hard and languid at twenty-one. . . . the city was bloated, glutted, stupid with cakes and circuses, and a new expression, 'O yeah?' summed up all the enthusiasm evoked by the announcement of the last super-skyscrapers."

There was a reverse side to Fitzgerald's romantic enthrallment with mood and detail, and this was his terrible weakness in thinking out an intellectual problem. Late in life he admitted that he had always found thinking itself "incredibly difficult," like "the moving of great secret trunks."

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Said Wilson of Fitzgerald: "He has been given imagination without intellectual control of it . . . and he has been given a gift for expression without many ideas to express." Two points might be made in Fitzgerald's defense. First, when it came to writing about young people, the "ideas" of his time were not very informed, and certainly not exciting; and second, Fitzgerald may have overcome this deficiency in his best fiction, e.g., in *The Great Gatsby*.

The relationship between the dreamer and the dream: all else is irrelevant in Fitzgerald's world. What links them is beauty, the contemplation of some "orgiastic future"—as concrete and fleeting as dawn in New York City which turns momentarily the heads of all-night gamblers, or as abstract and fulsome as the "promise" of Daisy Buchanan, a word which always enters Nick Garraway's description of her. To Fitzgerald, man was drawn forward and sometimes seduced by beauty, not, as the naturalists would have it, pushed forward and sometimes crushed by conditioning, education, and habit. Beauty he personified as a beautiful woman. He objectified her as the end of America's travail. His lyric panoramas are in the best tradition of Whitman, as, for instance, his likening of the very rich and very beautiful Nicole Diver to a sort of majestic tugboat with millions of American Dreams in tow:

"Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors—these were some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole. . . ."

Fitzgerald regarded the effect of beauty on man's imagination with a romantic mixture of fascination and fear that distinguishes him from just about any other American novelist. Man can pursue beauty too single-mindedly and be imprisoned by it, as John T. Unger is literally imprisoned by his sweetheart's father (in "Diamond as Big as the Ritz"). He can live too many lives trying to find it and end up like Jay Gatsby, a phantom without a past, or to a lesser degree like Nick Carraway, "enchanted and repulsed by the inexhaustible variety of life." Gatsby, Fitzgerald writes, sought a "Platonic conception of himself," and Platonic forms, of course, can draw man inward as well as outward. Time and again Gatsby reveals a sort of infantile regression in search of what he calls "the past." Walking with Daisy, "Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place among the trees—he could climb it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder." Yet Fitzgerald knew that the American Dream has one consolation: only by pursuing it can any of us achieve that "heightened sensitivity to life." Fitzgerald understood that motion depends upon beauty, and that ambitious persons—not successful or happy persons—have the clearest appreciation for her.

We are the only people who talk fondly about a national dream. It is surprising that Fitzgerald is the only great novelist to have depicted this dream as distinctively romantic and distinctively American. The temptation to draw parallels between the twenties and other eras of American growth was for him irresistible. He compared the Midwesterner arriving in New York City to "Dutch sailors" who first set eyes on "a fresh, green breast of a new world." Anthony Patch was the grandson of Adam J. Patch, Civil War cavalryman and robber baron, who at the age of fifty-seven "determined . . . to consecrate the remainder of his life to the moral regeneration of the world. He became a reformer among reformers." And Gatsby is brought side by side with James J. Hill for their likeness. Fitzgerald wrote intensely about a single, peculiar decade, but he used those years to expand on the American Dream as an ongoing spectacle—in which, of course, he himself shared. Gertrude Stein may finally have been a better judge of painters than she was of writers. Fitzgerald was not the leader of a "lost generation," writes Arthur Mizener, "except in the sense that explorers convinced that El Dorado is over the next mountain range may be said to be lost." □

Max Geltman

I Remember, I Remember — 1929

Nostalgia can be defined as pleasure derived from someone else's memories. We bathe in warm fellowship as we join in singing "After the Ball" (which even grandpa might have difficulty recalling) or "Shine On Harvest Moon" (which may be grandma's moonshine, not the astronauts'). But the 1929 I remember is all mine for I lived it, grew up in it, and it probably helped fashion me as no other year of my life did. Nor was it, as the later chroniclers called it, "the year of the great swing leftward."

It was a wonderful year. The songs we sang (or whistled) were by Gershwin and Porter, the former represented by *Porgy and Bess* (which had opened the year before) while Cole Porter's *Fifty Million Frenchmen* was the smash musical of the year, and the hit song of 1929, "You Do Something To Me," came from the show. Other hits of the year included a bit of Future Camp so that later generations could "tiptoe through the tulips" with Tiny Tim on late-night television. And the Marx Brothers—all of them, in the life and in the flesh—were cavorting in *Animal Crackers*.

But there was "serious" drama, too. Elmer Rice's *Street Scene* opened the year on Broadway, at the same time the Provincetown Playhouse on Macdougal Street was presenting four maginficent one-act plays by Eugene O'Neill, and Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre on Fourteenth Street was presenting superb productions of Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Ibsen for two bits, the fourth part of a dollar. When Broadway ventured into high drama, however, it usually ended in a pratfall. (A 1929 production of Thackeray's "Becky Sharp" with a cast of 100 lasted for one whole week!)

Withal, it was a glorious year because I was so much involved in it, acting (as a peon) in *Fiesta* (uptown at the Garrick), and when that folded (which it soon mercifully did) I managed things backstage on lower Seventh Avenue for the Irish Theatre's productions of O'Casey's *Silver Tassie* and Synge's *Playboy*. When not thus engaged—or in between—I was busy with productions in my own little theatres variously situated on Charles Street, Washington Square, and East Ninth Street—writing one-act plays of miners in the soft (hard?) coal pits of Pennsylvania. I had never been farther away from New York than New Jersey, and the coal mines of the Keystone State were as far removed from me as was the Swanee River from Irving Caesar. Mr. Caesar has recently divulged that he wrote the lyrics for Gershwin's "Swanee" years before he had ever been south of Fourteenth Street, adding: "I'm glad I wrote the words before I saw the river."

I'm glad I wrote my plays before I saw Pennsylvania. It was fun writing them, producing them, directing them. It was fun to be alive then with Hoover just settled in the White House as we debated the revolution—"of the word" (a recent Paris import)—in the corridors of bohemia. But America had other things on its mind. In that "leftward" year the reading public was getting its belly laughs from Chic Sale's *The Specialist*, a hymn to the nation's vanishing outhouses; it was clucking its collective tongue at the wonders exposed in Ripley's *Believe It Or Not*; but it was also reading—at the very top of the best-seller fiction list—*All Quiet on the Western Front*, mass kitsch for a mass audience that had ignored such earlier literate World War I novels as *Three Soldiers* (by John Dos Passos) and *The Enormous Room* (by e. e. cummings).

It was also a year in a decade given over to High Hyperbole, an affliction of poets and young people made noxious only when uttered by elder statesmen and other demagogues. Thus, William Carlos Williams was convinced (in 1925) that America was "the most lawless nation on earth," and Dos Passos demanded that the Widener Library

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at Harvard—his alma mater—be burned down!

But that was not the prevailing rhetoric in 1929, that blessed year when Dos (as his friends called him) was maturing as a writer with *42nd Parallel*. It was a year in which Ring Lardner's mastery of the short story was being seriously discussed even among the *literati*; when Hemingway was producing his best shorter works (perhaps indebted to Lardner, although he probably didn't know it); when Dos Passos was gasping his last revolutionary breath with *Airways, Inc.*, a noisy dramatic interlude on Grove Street which Edmund Wilson treated more kindly than it deserved. It was also the year when F. Scott Fitzgerald—his reputation established with *Gatsby*—tried his hand at drayma with *The Vegetable*, produced at the Cherry Lane Theatre in a corner of Greenwich Village. It told the story of a postal clerk who dreams he is President of the United States, only to find himself beset by make-believe problems that would haunt the life of a wide-awake president forty years later. Who says life doesn't imitate art?

But 1929 was not all cakes and ale; there was some sorrow mixed with the joy. It was the year when (on October 24) Wall Street "laid an egg," as *Variety* put it. But I knew *that* street only from a reading of populist literature; it did not touch my life. Sadly, *my* street—Fourteenth Street—was undergoing a transformation, was a victim to the bitch-goddess Progress. Where had stood the magnificent Academy of Music there was now looming before us the stone face of the future Con Ed building with its post-medieval clocktower hovering over the area.

But Luchow's was (and still is) across the street; Luchow's, where the Wurzberger really flowed; where Mencken and Nathan (and other celebrities from the political and literary life of the city) dined on a Sunday evening; Luchow's an emporium of *Gemutlichkeit*, where a string quartet sent forth Viennese melodies which, on a cold clear night, could be heard at the Crusader Cafeteria directly across the street where we held forth late into the early hours arguing the problems of the world, most of them still unsolved, dammit! But we never lost our sense of fun, or our insatiable curiosity for things stored away in books and in other people's minds. For that a post-graduate course was provided by the "lions" of the Public Library on Fifth Avenue (not the stone effigies guarding the entrance) who held forth on almost every subject under the sun with an authority that defied the scholarship of the ivied academies.

Here "Whitehead," a gentle panhandler would teach us the wisdom of the philosophy of his namesake, as well as the epistemology of Vahinger's *As If*. "Whitehead" was at his best on a late Sunday afternoon after he got through putting the bite on the princes of the Church as they left St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, he telling them in Latin (out of Aquinas) the meaning of holy charity which usually netted him a saw-buck which (even in those pre-Depression days) was a lot of bucks. Or we would challenge the Schaeffer Brothers to uphold their defense of Spinoza as the greatest philosopher of all times. But best of all was Leon Samson who could demolish with an epigram the most precious nostrums then circulating among the intelligentsia.

Although he was probably the only genius American Marxism has so far produced (he had nothing but contempt for the contemporary collectivisms that went under the names of Communism, Socialism, Stalinism, Lovestonism, and Trotskyism), he found the prevailing Liberalism in thought even more appalling. No one mocked the philosophy of Pragmatism with more telling effect than did Samson. And when he took after the Behaviorists, he didn't waste time on the pygmies (thus he surely would have regarded Dr. Skinner), but he took on John B. Watson, the daddy of the movement, whom he polished off with this cutting remark (heard in a Labor Temple lecture in 1929): "Descartes said, 'I think, therefore I am.' Watson says, 'There are white rats, therefore I don't think.'" After allowing a moment for this to sink in, he added with a flourish: "How long will it take the followers of a thoughtless psychology to learn the difference between a man and a rat?"

Another time he took on the great William James whom he quoted from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* as having said: "We and God have a business with each other . . . we are saved from wrongness by making proper connections with the higher powers." To which Samson retorted: "Only in a nation of upstarts, where 'proper connections' with the 'higher powers' are daily made between man and man, can its foremost philosopher democratically slap God on the back in the manner of a ward politician."

After a Labor Temple (or Library) session we would often go down to our favorite Village restaurant (The Black Rabbit) for stimulating conversation fueled by a Prohibition libation called a "punchino," a concoction made up of equal parts of black coffee and ether (or so we were told). We did not go there to satisfy a "thirst," that we did on Second Avenue where we imbibed a confection known as an "egg-cream," a delicacy that has gone out of the life of the City much as the joy went out of the booze in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*.

This refreshment, however, we took most often after a visit to Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theatre where among its more glorious moments, I once saw the only production in this country of a play by Lope de Vega (*The Gardner's Dog*)—and what a magnificent spectacle it was. But that part of my memory must be reserved for another—more reverential—occasion. □

Henry Regnery

The Freedom to Read

In the long fight against censorship which culminated in the Supreme Court decisions that virtually eliminated any effective control over what may be printed or distributed, the book publishers, through their association, played a leading part. If a dealer in obscene books or magazines in New York or a small town in Ohio was brought into court, the Association of American Publishers, along with the Civil Liberties Union, could be counted on to help in his defense. The Association, it might be noted, maintains a group called the Right to Read Committee which acts as a special guardian, so to speak, of the rights of publishers and distributors to handle any sort of book they feel they can sell. Having attained complete permissiveness, a state of affairs in which the works of the Marquis de Sade have become as readily available as those of Shakespeare, and the Playboy Press feels justified in publishing a book that triumphantly announces the death of the Puritan ethic, perhaps the time has come to ask how much has really been gained. Who has profited? Has all this permissiveness brought us better books, more inspired writers, a more just, a nobler society? In spite of their protestations about freedom, it is probably fair to assume that the publishers' participation in all this was not entirely free of self-interest, but do they, as a whole, stand to profit from it either?

A writer was once regarded as a person with a special gift and a member of a noble calling; he was a custodian of the word. The Republic of Letters was a concept which had meaning not only for writers, but for publishers as well. In their fight for an end to all restrictions on obscenity, isn't it possible that the publishers have succeeded in vulgarizing the book, with the consequent undermining of the respect which the book and their profession have traditionally enjoyed? When Hitler ordered his spectacular book burnings, educated people in all countries reacted with horror, for the reason that the book was regarded almost instinctively as the repository of truth, as the means by which the highest achievements of civilization are recorded and preserved. With a few more years of *The Love Machine*, *Sex and the Single Girl*, *The Playboy Book of Sex*, may we not soon be reaching the point where a gigantic book burning will be welcomed as a much-needed cleansing operation?

Mass education, mass democracy, mass communications, the commercialization of so much of life have had their effect, needless to say, on book publishing as well as everything else. From having been, in a sense, a profession with its own standards and values, publishing has largely become dominated by purely business consider-

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ations. The typical publishing firm of the nineteenth century, as continued to be the case into the 1930s, was a small business, and was often run by its owner, whose personality and point of view it reflected. He had to operate at a profit, which took skill and business judgment, but a book was still something unique, the work of the mind, written and produced, for the most part, for a small and literate audience. When Ezra Pound as a young man in London offered one of his earlier collections of poetry to Elkin Matthews, who was very much a publisher in the old style. Matthews, after reading the manuscript, asked Pound if he had any money to help with its publication. Pound answered that he had a shilling or two in his pocket if that would help, to which Matthews replied, and no answer could have been more characteristic of the sort of publisher he was, "Well, I wanted to publish it anyway."

Alfred Knopf was another publisher in the old style. When he agreed in the early twenties to publish H.L. Mencken's *American Mercury*, it was surely not in the expectation of great profits, although he no doubt hoped at least to cover his costs; the principal consideration in all likelihood was the prospect of association with Mencken and what the publishing of a distinguished magazine would do for the standing of his firm, and it was his decision. Now his old house is a subsidiary of Random House, which, in turn, is owned by RCA. Such a decision as Knopf made when he became the publisher of the *American Mercury* would now be a matter of high-level corporate policy.

The book has been vulgarized, degraded, and nothing better illustrates the degree of its degradation than the flood of obscenity that has all but engulfed us. There have always, of course, been obscene books, but in the past they were the exception, and were regarded as exceptions, as something done consciously and shamefacedly in defiance of standards and good taste. It should be emphasized, however, that it is not primarily a moral issue that is involved; what is at stake are the standards and values of civilization. The book is the chief means by which ideas are communicated and given standing and influence; when the book, therefore, is degraded, by using it as a means to appeal to the lowest, most perverted tastes, by treating it as a commodity and nothing else, society is degraded also.

The flood of pornography and obscenity that followed the Supreme Court decisions which held, substantially, that just about anything was permissible, and made local prosecution difficult or impossible, has resulted, not surprisingly, in a strong counterreaction, one consequence of which is the recent *Miller v. California* decision which goes back to the old test of "community standards." While this has not yet stemmed the tide, it has aroused the fear on the part of the Publishers and Magazine Distributors Associations, among others, that it will. They, therefore, are setting up special groups to oppose state and local action. A recent statement of the Authors League, which is probably representative of all these groups, puts their position in the form of "rights": the "right" of adults "to acquire the books they choose to read, and see the films and plays they choose to view" and of "librarians, booksellers, theatre owners, authors, publishers and producers. . . . to distribute such works to willing adults." What is forgotten in all this is that "no man is an island," as the liberals were fond of telling us when their current enthusiasm was the United Nations: the "right" of the publishers, producers, writers, *et al.* to bring out any sort of garbage the most depraved element of society might wish is also the right to assault, and perhaps to destroy, the standards and taste of society as a whole. Does anyone really have such a right, and doesn't society have the right to protect itself?

But what, before going any further, constitutes obscenity? What is the difference between one of Renoir's "Bathers" and the photograph of a naked girl in *Playboy* magazine? Both are erotic, but the eroticism of Renoir is the eroticism of life; it is not an end in itself, but a natural and perfectly normal part of a healthy life. The picture in *Playboy*, on the other hand, represents an eroticism which is an end in itself, is not a part of life, but its object; an element of life is made the whole thing. Writing in a different connection, Miguel de Unamuno put the issue with great clarity: "The love of money, said the Apostle, is the root of all evil, and that is because it takes riches for an end, when they are only a means. And the essence of sin is precisely that it takes means for end, that it does not recognize or that it despises the end purpose." If one compares the serenity, the serenity of having accepted and come to terms with the demands of life and the reality of the human condition, the beauty and completeness of the conception of such a picture as Renoir's "Young Woman Sewing" with the vulgarity, cheapness, and destructiveness of the founder of *Playboy* and what he calls the "Playboy philosophy," the distinction I am trying to make becomes sharper. All of which illustrates why, as I have said, obscenity is not primarily a moral problem; it is that, and much more, what is at stake is its destructiveness of the wholeness of life, of the proper relationship of things and values.

Stephen Spender, in an interview reprinted in *Time* a year or two ago, remarked that he now questioned his active participation in politics in the thirties, when it was fashionable for young intellectuals to take up left-wing causes with passionate fervor. "Who benefited from all that," he said, "what good did it do?" The true calling of the poet, he went on to say, is not political activism, but the protection of the purity of the language; when language deteriorates all else deteriorates with it. We of the twentieth century, of all people, should know how destructive language can be—Hitler was a master of language, as were, in their own way, Wilson, Churchill, and Roosevelt. But, as Max Picard put it, language "was given to man in advance," it is one of those primordial elements "which belongs to man's basic structure." When language is misused, therefore, one of the basic elements of man's nature is misused, or, again in the words of Max Picard, "When language is destroyed, man loses his relationship with the original Word from which his own words and their measure are derived."

It follows from what has gone before that the degradation of the book is not merely a symptom of the malaise from which our society is obviously suffering, it may well be one of its principal causes. It would be more exact, I should hasten to add, to speak of the malaise of our intellectuals, of those, that is, who presume to speak for us, rather than of society as a whole, but when a substantial part of the writers, professors, critics, journalists, and political pundits are confused, lacking in confidence and direction, unwilling to face the painful fact that two plus two always, inexorably, equals four, it is probably fair to say that society as a whole is at least being infected. The intellectuals, for example, speak of Watergate as a great moral crisis. To break into Democratic headquarters was, admittedly, ill-advised, foolish, and illegal, but to make a great political and constitutional crisis out of anything as essentially petty is indicative of the complete lack of proportion and common sense of our reigning intellectuals.

Far more serious is our unwillingness to

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make the hard decisions the present monetary crisis obviously requires, but it is easier to increase social security payments, raise the minimum wage, pay people for not working, to moralize about Watergate, the military-industrial complex, poverty, civil rights, whatever it may be, than to face up to the problems which may well destroy our country, to bring order into our fiscal affairs and restore confidence in our currency. Our intellectuals' utter lack of common sense and their inability to see things in proper proportion are shown by their rapturous enthusiasm for a presidential candidate who could seriously propose to give every man, woman, and child in the country $1,000. These, it must be remembered, are all people who have gone to college, many of them, in fact, teach in colleges, read books, but none not recommended by the *New York Times* or the *New York Review of Books*, and take themselves and each other with the utmost seriousness. They are also the people who write the editorials and review the books in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, give the commencement addresses in the prestige colleges—the last time around, we may be sure, about Watergate—in short, speak for our society, and, as I have said, they read books, at least the books written or recommended by their colleagues and counterparts. Is there not, therefore, some justification for the assertion that the malaise of the intellectuals is a consequence of the degradation of the book? And, finally, of what use is the "freedom to read" if we read the wrong things? □

Capital Punishment: The Ethics of Execution

Last year, the United States Supreme Court spent six months pondering the constitutionality of capital punishment. The case, *Furman v. Georgia* (408 U.S. 238), centered on the question of whether or not the death penalty amounted to "cruel and unusual punishment," and was hence prohibited by the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. The problem, however, proved too difficult for the nation's court of last appeal; in the end, it threw up its hands and produced nine separate opinions which collectively consumed more than 100 pages in the official *U.S. Reports*. Justice Douglas thought capital punishment was "cruel and unusual" because most criminals sentenced to death were poor and/or black—raising the question of whether Douglas sees a different constitutional standard for middle-class whites. Justices Brennan and Marshall (especially the latter) seemed to think that capital punishment in any form was "cruel and unusual." Justices White and Stewart rounded out the disparate "majority" in opinions that stressed the infrequency of executions (i.e., "unusual" in its most literal sense), and the discretion given to judges and juries in recommending the death sentence—leaving one to wonder whether frequent or mandatory executions would be permissible. The four Nixon appointees dissented. Justice Blackmun said in effect, "I don't like capital punishment any more than you, but it's a legislative, not a judicial, question." Justice Rehnquist's view could be summarized as "Once again, the court is turning the Constitution into a vehicle for its own moral predilections." Chief Justice Burger and Justice Powell seemed to agree with both ideas. All in all, it was a thorough mess, and it left to the nation's lawyers, judges, legislators, governors, and attorneys general the challenging task of figuring out yet another permutation of the supreme law of the land.

Last month in Boston, a hold-up man was also confronted with a life-and-death decision; he resolved his problem (with considerably less reflection than the Court's) by the simple expedient of putting a bullet through the head of police detective John Schroeder. What followed was a good illustration of the typical capital punishment debate in America. After Schroeder's funeral, over 600 policemen marched *en masse* to the Massachusetts statehouse and demanded that Governor Francis Sargent sign a bill which, in response to *Furman*, would have reenacted capital punishment for a select group of crimes, including the murder of a policeman. Their argument was summarized by Sgt. Chester Broderick, head of the Boston Patrolman's Association, who said, "No one can tell me or any other policeman that capital punishment is not a deterrent" and "If this bill deters one warped mind from killing a police officer, it will have been a good thing." The next day, an assortment of civil libertarians and others responded to this emotional demonstration by the police, calling the death penalty "barbaric" and claiming that the evidence was "overwhelming" that capital punishment was not a deterrent to murder. The Governor waffled: he let the bill die without his signature (a pocket veto); hinted that he might sign a narrower measure; and thus, in standard political fashion, pleased absolutely no one.

As is obvious from the above, capital punishment is a matter of considerable public controversy. In the Supreme Court, the question is cast in terms of "constitutionality;" in Massachusetts and the growing number of other states grappling with post-*Furman* capital punishment bills, the storm rages mainly over the issue of deterrence. Both questions are fairly interesting and fairly complex; and both will probably occupy some portion of the public spotlight for the foreseeable future. It is unfortunate, then, that neither can shed any light on the ultimate ethical question which underlies, or should underlie, the whole issue of capital punishment in the first place; namely, "Are there crimes for which an individual in our society deserves to die?" Examining both the "constitutional" and the "deterrence" debates shows that on this fundamental question both controversies are silent.

The problems with the "constitutional" approach are fairly apparent. First, as is demonstrated by the nine separate opinions in *Furman v. Georgia*, it is hopelessly muddled. Second, it is strained to the point of being fraudulent, as even a cursory examination of the Constitution reveals. The Fifth Amendment, for example, refers to the death penalty in three places: "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury . . . nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb . . . nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." The Fourteenth Amendment repeats the "due process" clause and applies it directly to the states. True, each of these sections involves limitations on the government's right to place the life a citizen in jeopardy; but those limitations become rather silly unless one presupposes (as did the authors of the Constitution) that the government *did* have a right in some circumstances to deprive a citizen of his life. It approaches absurdity to argue that in the Eight Amendment these same authors overturned that right in including the prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishment."

The most serious objection, however, is that strained and artful interpretations of the language of the Constitution tell one nothing about the basic ethical choice involved in the debate over capital punishment. To be sure, a direct constitutional prohibition, such as the one concerning laws about religion, does to a degree foreclose ethical debate on certain important issues. But where the "constitutional prohibition" rests on the tortured reasoning of a decision like *Furman*, it is clear that the Constitution is being used as a shield for something else. The closing paragraphs of Justice Marshall's opinion provide a good

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illustration: "In striking down capital punishment, this Court does not malign our system of government—on the contrary, it pays homage to it. In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute. We achieve 'a major milestone on the long road up from barbarism,' and join the approximately seventy other jurisdictions in the world which celebrate their regard for civilization and humanity by shunning capital punishment." At this point, Marshall *is* giving his views on the ethics of execution; but it is equally clear, I trust, that he is no longer in any way "interpreting" a constitution.

The issue of "deterrence" is a much more common focus of debate than the constitutional one, but it is similarly flawed. The arguments are by now a familiar refrain. Opponents of capital punishment say that there is no evidence that the death penalty deters the comission of murder, and point to studies showing no increase in murder rates after the abolition of the death penalty in a given jurisdiction. Proponents of capital punishment argue that their adversaries have an unsophisticated and overly mechanical notion of how deterrence works, and claim that comparative murder rate studies prove nothing since the states involved weren't enforcing capital punishment when it was on the books. Each side attempts, with fairly sophisticated arguments, to place the so-called "burden of proof" on the other. It is an emotional, heated, occasionally angry dispute; and like most such discussions, neither side says much that impresses the other.

In a recent article for the *New York Times Magazine*, Harvard's James Q. Wilson summarizes the arguments on either side, and points out that the debate on the utilitarian issue of deterrence is irresolvable. Wilson says, quite simply, that 1) No serious study shows definitively that capital punishment deters murder; 2) No serious study shows that it does not; and 3) There is no way to find out one way or the other because the methodological problems are insurmountable. In the first place, no state is willing to use the death penalty in a way that would yield good experimental data on the issue of deterrence. And even if a state was willing to try, the effects of region, race, and class on murder rates are so important that, in Wilson's words, "the additional importance of the death penalty or its absence is likely to be slight."

But here again, the most serious flaw in the deterrence argument is that it says nothing about the most important question. In short, the relative utility of the death penalty as a deterrent to murder does not answer the basic ethical question: Shall society, by its laws, deem that death is the *appropriate* punishment for one who takes human life?

The point of all this is fairly straightforward. Resolving the issue of whether our society should or should not have capital punishment does not depend on either the subtleties of constitutional debate nor on a proliferation of statistical studies of deterrence. It is not a question of whether the death penalty deters people in general from committing murder, nor whether it protects society from a particular murderer, nor any other possible utilitarian argument. Indeed, at its most philosophical level, it is not even a question of whether a murderer *should* be executed; it is instead a question of whether or not we, as a society, say that a murderer *deserves* to be executed.

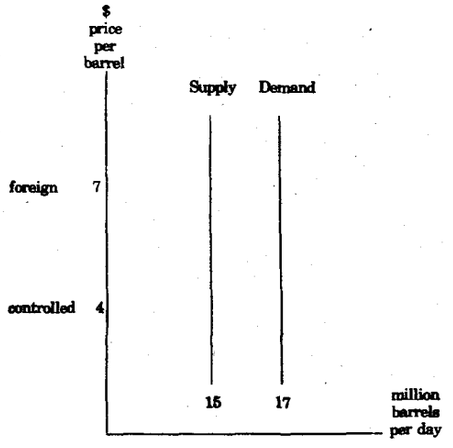
That is the key question of capital punishment. It is the type of question we avoid, for as Wilson suggests, "we are an increasingly secular and positivist society that has confidence in its ethical premises." But a healthy public policy, it seems to me, deals with precisely such ethical premises; and we act to our own detriment as a people when we dodge that task by falsely setting issues in either a "utilitarian" or an overly formal, quasi-constitutional context.

One of the Boston patrolmen who marched up Beacon Hill to lobby for capital punishment summarized this very well. "I don't care," he said, "whether capital punishment is a deterrent or not. If someone kills me or one of my brother police officers, there is simply no place for that person in society." Whether that patrolman's answer is right or wrong, his question at least is correct. That is the issue—the only issue—and it will not go away. □

Alan Reynolds

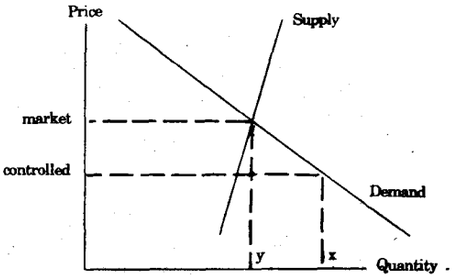
Energy Economics

These are hard times for economists, who have to read the most inane fulminations about shortages and suffer the label of "ideologue" if they dare to mention price. The nation *needs* seventeen million barrels of petroleum a day, we're told, and only has fifteen. Obviously, our leader will have to *do something*, anything and everything, about the gap. To any freshman in economics, such rhetoric looks like this:



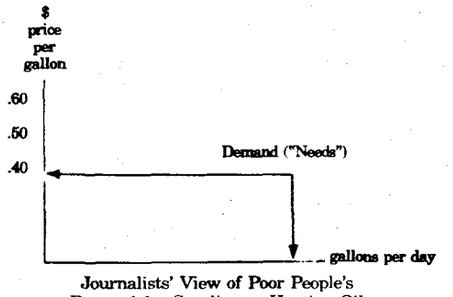
The Journalists' View of the Petroleum Market

Burn your text if instead it says something like this:



Definition of a Shortage (x–y)

Next, we're told that prices (all prices?) must be kept below market-clearing equilibrium levels, because poor people buy only what they "need" now and could not afford any at a higher price. It is almost embarrassing to translate that into a demand curve, showing how much is purchased at each price:



Journalists' View of Poor People's Demand for Gasoline or Heating Oil

The wealthy, on the other hand, have no needs, but they do "squander" energy regardless of price. (e.g., William Buckley no longer drives a Honda 50 to work, but squanders gas in a Renault 16 instead; his house isn't air conditioned, but the wine cellar is—first things first). In other words, the demand curve of an affluent family supposedly goes straight up, as in the first graph.

Now, even in an age of impulsive pragmatism, there are still rigorous and sloppy ways of analyzing problems. It simply will not do, for example, to talk about fuel "savings" from various schemes without consideration of the costs involved. If fuel were *infinitely* valuable, that would be all the more reason to let the price rise. But time, income, and comfort are valuable too, and it isn't obvious to my children that Christmas lights are "inessential."

Example: A salesman who used to cover sixty-five miles in an hour now needs about an hour and twenty minutes to cover that distance at 50 m.p.h. If the slowdown improves gas mileage from, say, thirteen to fifteen miles-per-gallon, it will save seven-tenths of one gallon on the sixty-five mile trip (4.3 v. 5 gals.). At forty cents a gallon, the trade-off is between a twenty-eight cent monetary saving (7/10 of forty cents) and the loss of twenty minutes' time. That is, the salesman's time is valued at a little more than a penny a minute, or about $.84

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an hour. If it comes out of his leisure time, the difference between the salesman's usual pay and the $.84 is an implicit tax; if it comes out of productive time, it is also a loss to the economy.

Another example of sloppy reporting is the widely-circulated percentage increases over the oil companies' profits and exports last year, since last year was an extremely lousy year on both scores (which is part of the problem, then and now).

Year	Petroleum Refineries: Net Profit in percent of Sales	Petroleum Refineries: Distillate Exports (thousands of barrels)
1966	11.2%	N.A.
1967	11.0	N.A.
1968	10.7	N.A.
1969	10.1	1,860
1970	9.3	1,444
1971	8.3	1,858
1972	6.6	448
1973	N.A.	1,275 (est.)

The striking decline in oil company profits is due to many factors, not the least of which are OPEC's (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) cartel pricing of crude oil, and the reduced depletion allowance since 1969. The role of price controls is clearly indicated by the fact that wholesale costs of crude fuels have risen by more than 50 percentage points since 1967 (the wholesale petroleum index for October 1973 is 133.3, but extra supplies for expansion are fare more costly than the average), while the consumer price index for gasoline was 121.8 as of October—even lower than the average index of June 1971.

Everyone has big plans for the oil industry, all of which require *money* that ultimately must come out of prices. The Department of the Interior has a plan for getting oil from shale which, even in the prototype stage, "would require an investment of nearly 1 billion dollars in the next ten years." Yet a Chase Manhattan Bank study in September 1972 reported that oil industry sales were up 258 percent over the last ten years, while profits had increased by only 89 percent—that is, profits per unit had fallen sharply. The twenty-eight major oil companies were short on capital, Chase Manhattan showed, and for several years had been forced to borrow money. And if they invested *twice* as much during the 1970s as they did in the 1960s, the report concluded, it would not be enough.

In a letter to the *Wall Street Journal* (April 23, 1973), even John Kenneth Galbraith reminded the politicians, in a scolding tone, that "controls should not be used where price increases are caused by an excess in aggregate demand or a shortage in the specific supply." Another *Journal* article (Nov. 26, 1973) by the former head of the Council of Economic Advisers, Paul McCracken, shows why rationing or a higher gasoline tax will *delay* a solution to the shortage. Milton Friedman and Henry Wallich have devoted *Newsweek* columns to explaining why prices of gasoline and heating oil *must* rise (ten to twenty cents a gallon would probably suffice). The 1973 *Economic Report of the President* points out that "the underlying rationale of the controls . . . is that the price and wage increases to be restrained were not increases necessary to avert shortages."

But the economists—who naturally supply what is demanded—have created a bogus rationale for turning economic decisions over to the politicians. So this is the year for *ad hoc* gut reactions, for matter over mind. Politicians control the price of beef and find we have not only a shortage of beef and freezers, but of substitute meats and of tallow used to make candles, soap, and rubber. Politicians control the price of steel pipe, so there isn't any available for drilling oil wells. Politicians control the price of natural gas and discover that everyone abandons costly coal, and that the shortage of natural gas creates a shortage of bricks (dried by gas) and fertilizer. Politicians control the price of fertilizer and find that it is being bought at higher prices by foreigners, along with the ammonia nitrate needed to blast more coal. Politicians force an arbitrary devaluation of the dollar, to stimulate exports, and then slap on export controls.

The energy shortage is only one of many shortages, and if we are to turn to rationing every time demand exceeds supply by 10-20 percent at the controlled price, we will soon be rationing nearly everything. The idea that poverty can be solved by keeping prices at a level that discourages production and encourages waste is simply ludicrous. These are *very* bad times for economists. □

James Dornan

Nixon's China Initiative

"The biggest story I have ever covered," Joseph Alsop wrote with characteristic hyperbole: indeed, although nearly two years have elapsed since the event, it remains plausible to assert that the President's visit to Peking ranks among the most brilliantly-staged foreign policy operations of the postwar period. Few such events have attracted the support and aroused the enthusiasm of such a wide spectrum of professional opinion; fewer still have so promiscuously stimulated the imagination of the American populace.

To be sure, what has often been called "the mystique of the East" has long had a singular impact upon the American—not to say the western—political mind. The sheer vastness of the Orient, with its countless millions of people, its unfathomably nonwestern values, its ancient and proud yet curiously primitive civilizations, has fascinated westerners for centuries. China in particular has been the focus of American attention since the late eighteenth century, in considerable measure for economic reasons.

Beyond such underlying factors, several additional circumstances helped create a climate of opinion favorable to the President's initiative. The sheer audacity of the undertaking itself was obviously crucial. The sudden turnabout of relations with a nation toward which the United States had been unremittingly antagonistic for more than two decades was striking in itself; that it was accomplished through super-secret diplomacy followed by a week-long presidential sojourn in a land never before visited by a ranking American elected official was truly astonishing.

The media obviously had an enormous impact as well. Every public moment of the trip, appropriately embellished by rhapsodic commentary, was beamed home to enthralled television audiences. Respected reporters such as Alsop and W.H. Hornby of the *Denver Post*, not to mention the members of the congressional delegations which quickly followed the President across the Pacific, were lavish in their praise of the "New China." Alsop was writing for most of them when he enthused that "everything in China has changed, in truth, except the endlessly resilient, hard-working and clever Chinese people. The quality of life has changed, vastly for the worse for the ancient ruling class but for the better for everyone else. . . . The right way to see the New China, in truth, is to forget the Communist label and to consider the revolution as a specifically Chinese event"; he went so far as to suggest that "the period of harshness, of dogmatism, of extreme heavy-handedness" in the Communist rule over China is drawing to a close. Steffens and the Shaws went only a little further in their praise of the Soviet system after their visits during the 1920s and 1930s. (See Alsop, "In China, Everything is Changing" and "Conclusions After a Visit to China," December 16, 1972, and January 15, 1973, *Boston Globe*. For Hornby's articles, see *Congressional Record*, January 29, 1973, pp. S1474-82. Alan Reynolds has written an excellent critique of these and similar analyses of the "New China"; see "A Reader's Guide to the Visitors' Reports," *National Review*, March 3, 1972.)

Finally, general public discontent with recent American foreign policy was a significant factor. The deepening war-weariness of the American population, a reaction both against Vietnam and against the seemingly endless Cold War, had molded a ready constituency for policies of conciliation with our postwar adversaries. Long before the specifics of his new foreign policy became known, Nixon's promise of "an era of negotiation, not confrontation" had struck a responsive popular cord.

That the average American found the China trip of compelling interest, and in

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the main viewed it favorably, is therefore not surprising. But there was a broad spectrum of American intellectual opinion equally receptive to the new policy. Few of the nation's so-called Sinologists, for example, had accepted the analysis of Chinese aims which culminated in the extension of the containment policy to Asia; virtually all rejected the thesis that China was the principal enemy in Vietnam, as the Johnson Administration had so often argued. Hence, most of the "old China hands" greeted the Nixon visit with unrestrained enthusiasm.

Moreover, by the time the Nixon-Kissinger team assumed office a consensus was rapidly forming among opinion leaders around the "limitationist" position concerning the goals and activities appropriate for American foreign policy in the seventies. That consensus attracted many conservatives as well as liberals, although for fundamentally quite different reasons. Both camps agreed that the United States was " overextended" in its international commitments and hence needed to scale down considerably its operations and activities abroad. Orthodox liberals apparently believed as well that a reduced international role for the United States and a concentration upon domestic reform would enable America to better fulfill her historic mission of propagating American ideals; in this view, moral example rather than military force was to be the means for changing the world. (For a discussion of this point, see author's "The Search for Purpose in American Foreign Policy," *Intercollegiate Review*, Winter 1970–71.) Many conservatives, on the other hand, were persuaded that the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy bespoke a new "realism" in American diplomacy. Nixon's policy, it was argued, represented the abandonment of the crusading internationalism of Woodrow Wilson and his liberal successors, and the adoption in its stead of the "national interest" as the standard guiding our international behavior. Kissinger's theory of international politics, as articulated in the hard-headed logic of *A World Restored* and *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, was believed to rest on precisely such a foundation; more disquieting features of his approach, particularly as revealed in the position papers which he wrote for Nelson Rockefeller during the 1968 preconvention campaign, went unnoticed.

Thus many conservatives expected that Nixon's China policy would attempt to exploit the Sino-Soviet dispute in order to improve America's position in the global conflict with the USSR. Barry Goldwater, on the other hand, in his first full comment on the China initiative, urged conservatives to accept the fact that "this is not 1960; it is 1972, and the world situation which we now confront is an entirely new ball game." "I am satisfied that we have not given away one single thing to the Red Chinese," he stated, and he asked that "all Americans join in supporting the President of the United States in his efforts to establish world peace in the most direct and effective way possible." Some on the Right —William Buckley most prominently— were far more dubious; but even these commentators did little more than denounce the euphoria and the atmospherics which accompanied the Nixon trip. Buckley himself was largely content to reiterate his moral objections to the Peking regime.

There has been, in sum, virtually no cogent examination of the political assumptions and purposes of the Nixon-Kissinger grand design for the reorientation of American foreign policy, or of the place of the Peking initiative in that design. Such analysis as has appeared in the press and professional literature has consisted principally of superficial remarks about an allegedly-emerging "tripolarity," with little attempt either to define the political, military, and economic conditions under which true tripolarity could occur, or to demonstrate that such a state of affairs is or should be the primary objective of American foreign policy. But that aside, virtually all commentators have missed the real point: the China gambit, electrifying though it may have been as international theater, and whatever its long-run importance, was actually only a sideshow in what Nixon clearly regards as the principal scenario of his foreign policy, the effort to establish an effective détente with the Soviet Union.

I

Those who attribute to Henry Kissinger the paramount role in the formulation of the Nixon Administration's foreign policy should reread the now-famous article, "Asia after Vietnam," written by Nixon himself for *Foreign Affairs* in October 1967. Although principally concerned with recommendations for America's post-Vietnam Asian policy, the article adumbrates in more-or-less complete form most of the themes of what was later to be called the "Nixon Doctrine," and lays the foundation for the unusually coherent global strategy articulated by the Nixon Administration after it assumed office. (Kissinger's thinking had been developing along lines remarkably parallel to Nixon's, especially between 1965 and 1968; see the analysis in Stephen R. Graubard's *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*, pp. 223–69.) In general, that strategy rests on the belief that virtually all of the forces and factors which determined the structure of world politics during the first two postwar decades have changed.

The principal changes are said to be six in number. Japan and the nations of Western Europe, the latter gradually drawing closer together economically and politically, have recovered from the ravages of World War II, and are capable once again of assuming major roles in the world political system. The new nations of Africa and Asia have substantially matured since the early post-independence period; they now appear able to resist external aggression and to hold their own in relations with the bigger powers. The one-time communist monolith has been shattered, replaced by a loosely organized bloc whose members quarrel as often as they cooperate. U.S. military preeminence has given way to a condition of strategic parity between the USSR and the United States, substantially reducing American freedom of maneuver in crisis situations. The old "isms"—the once-vibrant ideologies which for twenty years animated the foreign policies of the great powers—have lost their vitality, and more traditional goals such as security and economic progress have become the primary concerns of the superpowers. Finally—most important of all in the Nixon view—United States foreign policy is now inhibited by serious internal constraints. Our citizens' "psychological resources" have been exhausted and their "moral strength" has been undermined; the nation's ability to play a major role in world politics is thus severely diminished. (For a characteristic discussion of these points, see *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace* [February 18, 1970 pp. 1–3] and *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Shaping a Durable Peace* [May 3, 1973, pp. 1–9], Reports to the Congress by Richard M. Nixon.)

The American response to these transformations in international politics, according to the Administration, must be commensurately far-reaching. First, our foreign policy objectives and interests must be restructured. The universalization of American principles and values can no longer constitute an important purpose of American policy; the day is past when we can look forward confidently to a democratic world emerging under American auspices and leadership. "Two centuries ago," Nixon wrote in his 1971 Annual Report, "our mission was to be a unique exemplar of free government. Two decades ago it was to take up worldwide burdens of securing the common defense, economic recovery, and political stability. Today we must work with other nations to build an enduring structure of peace." Stability and order, not the "expansion of the domain of freedom," must become the goals of our foreign policy. (For a more complete analysis of the main themes of the Nixon Administration's foreign policy, see the author's "The Nixon Doctrine, Strategy, and Tripolarity," available from the Intercollegiate Studies Institute.)

Not only must American expectations be scaled down, but our role in world politics must be substantially diminished as well. The day is past when global security can depend solely on American power or American will. But since other nations are now capable of doing more for themselves, this need not mean a rising level of insecurity around the world. It is only necessary that our determination to reduce our efforts be clearly understood, so that others will realize that they must assume responsibility for their own defense.

The effort to call forth a greater effort

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by others in maintaining their own—and world—security has constituted one of the Administration's major purposes from the outset. The Nixon Doctrine in its original formulation, while reiterating America's commitment to aid both those nations which we consider vital to our security and others which are threatened by nuclear attack, was in considerable measure a hortatory device aimed at erstwhile friends and allies; the new distance which we have introduced into our relations with Europe and Japan, best symbolized by the "shocks" administered to the latter in 1971, appears similarly motivated. In the future, Nixon has announced, "our interests must shape our commitments, rather than the other way around." Kissinger has made it even more clear that far-reaching changes in the structure of American alliances may be in the offing: "if the only argument for American military participation in an area," he has said, "is the fact that the United States happens to have made a treaty some fifteen years ago, that would be a very precarious position for that area and for us. . . . So there has to be a periodic review of our commitments and there has to be a very systematic attempt to define our interests." (*Background Briefing [United States Foreign Policy]*, June 26, 1970, mimeo) This statement, made to the press in mid-1970, deserved far more attention than it received.

It is thus clearly the Administration's view that other nations should no longer rely upon their alliances with the United States as the sole or even the primary instrument of their security. At the same time, the United States has arrived at a new definition of its primary interests and a new estimate of the means appropriate to safeguard them. Those interests concern especially the emerging new relationship with the USSR. Kissinger has believed at least since 1968 that the Soviet Union—and for that matter the CPR—is no longer a revolutionary power, although still anxious for a large role in world politics. Nixon, in turn, has made it plain that we fully recognize the right of the USSR to great power status, with the appropriate territorial and other prerequisites; indeed, even the "natural expansion of Soviet influence in the world" will not arouse American hostility unless the Soviets seek "exclusive or predominant positions" in areas where the United States retains vestigial interests.

Nixon and Kissinger manifestly hope that already-tempered Soviet designs can be further modified by American acceptance of the USSR's recently acquired global status and by American policies aimed at cooperation and interdependence. The Soviets have doubtless already taken note of the scaling down of American purposes represented by the Nixon Doctrine itself; in addition, the Administration has explicitly renounced any American interest in altering the domestic political order of the Soviet Union, both by public statements to that effect and more recently by its vigorous opposition to the Mills-Vanik legislation aimed at forcing a liberalization of Soviet emigration policies. Beyond that, Nixon and Kissinger have sought to create a "momentum toward progress" in our relations with the Soviets by means of negotiations on a broad range of issues; the economic arrangements discussed at the Moscow and Washington summits in particular, they believe, have established "an interdependence between our economies which provides a continuing incentive to maintain a constructive relationship."

It is only in the context of their convictions about the future of the Soviet-American relationship, therefore, that many otherwise inexplicable features of the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy can be understood. If our conflict with the Soviets has been mitigated by events—especially by a change in Soviet ambitions—and can be expected to further diminish in the future, then America's fundamental security position is markedly improved. Not only is the danger of a military confrontation with the USSR reduced, but the need to "contain communism" through a vast complex of alliance systems is largely eliminated. Similarly affected is the whole range of American political interests abroad. In the past these interests have been in no small measure determined by the exigencies, real or perceived, of the Soviet-American conflict. With that conflict abated, they will of necessity be reduced in number and importance; so too will the need for military power and political influence to protect them. Herein may lie the explanation for

the Administration's apparent lack of concern over both the relative decline of American military power and the political significance of that decline. In the Nixon-Kissinger design, our security in the future will be guaranteed above all through the new association with the USSR. To be sure, we must avoid an overly abrupt break with the patterns of the past to avoid upsetting the always-delicate equilibrium of the international system. We must also maintain strength sufficient to convince the Soviets that there is no alternative to détente and to deter direct threats to our physical survival from whatever source. Such considerations as these explain the Administration's vigorous support for the Trident and the B-1 weapons programs. It cannot be too strongly emphasized, however, that the purposes of Nixon's defense program are quite limited, a point grasped by neither his opponents nor his supporters in Congress; indeed, his annual calls for an "American military capability second to none" represent mostly a bone tossed to the defense conservatives there and elsewhere.

II

Doubtless because of the peculiar difficulties and delicate negotiations involved in establishing relations with the CPR, the Administration has been considerably more reticent in articulating its expectations for the Chinese relationship than it has for that with the USSR. Nixon has stated that he undertook initial steps to establish contacts with the Peking regime shortly after assuming office, implementing a design he had first set forth in the 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article. Rumors of new tensions in the Sino-Soviet relationship and of possible Soviet intent to launch a preemptive attack on Chinese nuclear installations may have influenced the pace of his actions as well. (Alsop has asserted that the Soviets informally sought tacit American support for such an attack early in 1969, and John Newhouse alleges that the USSR during the SALT talks in 1970 proposed a plan for joint retaliatory action against China in the event of a nuclear war initiated by Peking against the USSR or the United States. See Alsop, "Thoughts Out of China, I: Go Versus No-go," *New York Times Magazine*, March 11, 1973, and Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT*, pp. 188–89.) But beyond the now-repetitious salutes to the Chinese as a "great and vital people" without whose cooperation "no stable and enduring international order is conceivable" plus occasional references to China's future economic and military potential, he and Kissinger have said little concerning the assumptions and purposes of the new China policy. The contrast with the excesses which have often characterized Administration rhetoric on the future of U.S.-Soviet relations is striking. (Compare the section of the 1973 State of the World message dealing with the CPR with that discussing relations with the USSR; *1973 Annual Report*, pp. 16–25 and 26–39.) If the hopes and expectations of the American people have been overly aroused by the China visit—and it is by no means certain that such is the case—blame must be placed primarily on the media and not on the President.

In any event, while the Administration's restraint in discussing its China policy complicates the task of analysis, its general purposes are quite clear. No "grand alliance" between the United States and the CPR against the Soviets is intended, nor is any effort to be made to use the Chinese connection to alter a military and political balance of power which is rapidly worsening from the American standpoint. Neither is an improvement in Sino-American relations being sought by the Administration as an end in itself. (It has been suggested that the pro-Pakistan "tilt" of American policy during that nation's war with India was designed to earn plaudits from Pakistan's principal ally as well as to repay Pakistan from her aid in opening Washington-Peking communications. But the Administration, it should be noted, perhaps not without disingenuousness has defended its pro-Pakistan policy as an effort to forestall total domination of the subcontinent by an Indian regime increasingly disposed to act as Russia's agent. See the *1972 Annual Report*, pp. 141–52.) The principal purpose of the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy is the achievement of a permanent improvement in relations with the USSR, and the opening to Peking must be understood primarily in terms of its contribution to that end. The Administration believes that Moscow's fear of China's military potential and territorial irredentism will fur-

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ther strengthen the Soviet interest in a détente with the United States. While the role of China in world politics is not without significance for the Administration, Nixon and Kissinger continue to view the world in bipolar terms; the "age of tripolarity," if it is to come at all, is in their view still some time in the future.

To be sure, it is doubtless true that there exist significant ancillary motives behind the Administration's Asian policy as well. There has been widespread speculation, for example, that the Administration hoped to obtain Peking's support for a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war. There is little firm evidence on this issue, however, and it may be that most commentators have in any event missed the central point. Nixon certainly was convinced even before the onset of his administration that the American public would not support a foreign policy which did not result in an American military departure from Southeast Asia. At the same time, he repeatedly expressed concern about the possible impact of an overly precipitous withdrawal upon Soviet perceptions of our will and constancy.

The China policy thus served his purposes nicely. It made possible a withdrawal from Vietnam under terms which earlier Nixon had considered unsatisfactory, but which placated the American public to the greatest extent feasible without doing severe damage to America's global position. Since it had often been officially stated that the containment of China was one of the foremost reasons for our involvement in Vietnam, once Chinese hostility had at least somewhat abated it was not as important to American credibility abroad that we stand firm in Indochina. On the domestic scene, the key factor was popular ambivalence: a majority of Americans appeared to desire an end to the U.S. presence in Southeast Asia, but also were plainly apprehensive about expanding communist influence in Asia and elsewhere. The public thus might be largely satisfied with a political settlement which, though far from perfect, did not seem likely to set in motion a general communist advance throughout the Orient. Détente with China would reduce fears that the latter might be the result of a "compromise" in Vietnam. In any case, there can be no doubt that the China policy had important political roots, related to the 1972 campaign as well as to the broader purpose of attracting popular support for the Administration's foreign policy generally.

Over the longer term, Nixon may hope that China's own objectives will serve to check North Vietnam's more extended ambitions. From the perspective of overall policy priorities, however, his views on the importance of Southeast Asia to the United States have been unclear for some time. As many commentators have observed, the Nixon Doctrine is notably vague as to precisely what "interests" are sufficiently vital to justify American intervention in Third World conflicts under the perceived changed conditions of world politics. Given the new relationship with Peking, not to mention present public aversion to interventionist policies, Nixon appears to have concluded that Vietnam is of substantially less significance for American purposes than was the case earlier, and so was willing to accept a negotiated settlement whose terms made the ultimate survival of a non-communist government in Saigon doubtful.

Considered even within Nixon's own perspective, of course, the China policy has incurred substantial costs. The loss of "face" for the United States implicit in the spectacle of an American president appearing as a supplicant in the court of the new Chinese mandarins had an immediate impact throughout Asia; indeed, evidence indicates that uncertainty concerning America's future intentions is now widespread in the region. (See the summary of Asian reactions in William R. Kintner's *The Impact of President Nixon's Visit to Peking on International Politics*, pp. 23–56.) Equally damaging to America's prestige were the terms of the agreements announced at the conclusion of the Nixon visit. The CPR conceded virtually nothing, suffering at most a slight blow to its stature as leader of the world's revolutionary forces. Peking agreed to facilitate scientific and other "people-to-people" exchanges, but the Chinese stand to profit as much from these as the United States. Peking made no pledge to diminish her support for insurrectionary movements along her southern border; indeed, such activities continue unabated. The United States publicly conceded that Taiwan is part of China; and while not yet renouncing our defense pact with Taipei, we have agreed ultimately to eliminate the American military presence from the island. (A substantial reduction in the American force on Taiwan, Secretary Schlesinger recently disclosed, is scheduled for this fall.) Given the Administration's announced intention, referred to earlier, to review all American treaty commitments in the light of our "interests," the demise of the Taipei regime at some not-distant point appears probable. Finally, Nixon's public utterances in Peking came perilously close to an admission that the United States bears primary responsibility for the Asian cold war itself. One Chinese leader summed up rather effectively the impression gained from the visit when he told *Washington Post* reporter Stanley Karnow that "we don't owe the Americans anything, but the Americans owe us much. Now they are redressing the balance."

III

There can be no doubt that the Nixon China policy, and the more basic global strategy of which it is a part, reflects and reinforces some of the worst features of the American political character. As many commentators on international politics have pointed out, the danger that summitry and its accompanying atmospherics will create among the populace an illusion of international harmony is an ever-present one in a democracy. Even more worrisome is the apparently irresistable inclination of every American president to believe that he can succeed where his predecessors have failed by bringing peace to the world. It is a commentary on the depth of the utopian strain in the American political tradition that an Administration which prides itself on its toughmindedness and whose principal foreign policy architect is widely—if somewhat inaccurately—celebrated for his "realism" has proved to be little more immune than its predecessors from such temptations. To be sure, the current utopianism is of a sharply different variety than that of Wilson, FDR, *et al.* It is surely to Nixon's credit that his administration has explicitly renounced the ancient American conviction that the world should be remade in the American image, and that policy making during his presidency has exhibited an awareness of the realities of power at home and abroad. Nevertheless, he and Kissinger both have grossly underestimated the power drive of the Soviet state, and have drastically exaggerated the stabilizing effects of nuclear weapons in the international system. In the last analysis they appear unable to accept the permanence of conflict as the fundamental reality of world politics. The distance between contemporary American foreign policy and the moralistic-legalistic tradition whose apotheosis was Wilson is thus not as great as it appears.

The danger is obviously real that the Administration will allow its fascination with certain features of the new China relationship to obscure our differences with Peking over the future course of Asian and for that matter global international politics. Moreover, prudence alone would dictate that the possibility of a Moscow-Peking rapprochement, particularly in the post-Mao leadership era, not be totally discounted; any attempt to use Peking as a permanent make-weight in the balance of power on the American side—a policy which the Administration has rejected, albeit for the wrong reasons—could prove to be dangerous in the extreme.

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Nevertheless, the conclusion remains inescapable that the dangers inherent in the Nixon China policy are limited when compared with those created by Administration assumptions about the possibilities for a détente with the USSR. The unchecked build-up of Soviet strategic and conventional military power, the continued attempts by the Soviets to project political influence in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, the uncompromising position the USSR has assumed in the various East-West negotiations now in progress all constitute challenges to Administration logic as yet unanswered. Indeed, the argument that Soviet foreign policy objectives in their broadest definition have decisively changed is only slightly more compelling now than when it was first raised not long after the Revolution of 1917. It would not be the least of the ironies associated with this Administration if the attention lavished on the Peking initiative caused the nation to misperceive the ultimate purposes and attendant dangers of the Nixon-Kissinger global strategy generally. Is it too cynical to suggest that this may have been among the purposes of the China gambit from the outset? Perhaps; but at the very least it is probable that the Administration would regard this as a not-unwelcome consequence. □

Book Review

A Second Flowering

by Malcolm Cowley
Viking $7.95

"Ellery Queen" were born (there were two of him, cousins) in 1905; likewise Dalton Trumbo and Ayn Rand, John O'Hara, Edgar Snow and Robert Penn Warren and Lionel Trilling. That was the year in which James Joyce turned 23, Ezra Pound 20, T.S. Eliot 17, which makes Eliot just conceivably old enough to have been Dalton Trumbo's father, an indiscretion he happily didn't commit. Psychic paternity works by a different law, in this case also negative. Joyce, Pound, and Eliot weren't too young but just a little too old to serve as intellectual examples to Queen, Rand, Snow, Trumbo *et al.* when Q, R, S, T *et al.* should eventually have come to need mentors.

An intellectual mentor needs to be either young enough to be the client's big brother or old enough to be his grandfather. Viewed from 1905, the innovating masters fell in between. So the 1905 bunch lived on a fringe, just old enough not to have been much affected by the great "modernist" generation of the 1880s—Joyce, Pound, Eliot, Williams, Stravinsky, Picasso. Also they were born a little too late to have collected their wits before the 1914 war. For them the "pre-war" was just childhood. Most of them missed the point of the twentieth century.

But we are in a realm of fine-tuning, not channel-changing. Move back in time a little from 1905, move closer, closer to the great generation, and you get a picture. You commence to encounter men who could feel that Joyce, say, was an elder contemporary, to learn from; men, moreover, old enough by 1914 to have acquired some sense of what suddenly began to be swept away that August. You encounter, working backward, Thomas Wolfe (1900); then Hart Crane and Hemingway (1899), Wilder and Faulkner (1897), Fitzgerald and Dos Passos (1896), e.e. cummings (1894): the personnel of Malcolm Cowley's *A Second Flowering*. Wolfe was the most Joyce-obsessed of the lot, and the least war-conscious; he was only 14 when it broke out. He's the youngest man to whom Cowley pays any heed.

Cowley, himself born in 1898, has been writing about his contemporaries for fifty years, and has to his credit one especially shining effort, the nearly single-handed rescue of Faulkner from what he rightly calls "scandalous neglect." In 1945 every on of Faulkner's seventeen books was out of print; then Cowley's classic essay (reprinted and expanded here) demonstrated how the books all hung together, a home-made *Comedie Humaine*, and opinion suddenly pulled itself together.

It's hard to repress the suspicion that Faulkner, just one year Cowley's senior, came in for this devoted act of salvage in part by belonging to the right age-group. Malcolm Cowley showed no visible concern for the comparably scandalous neglect of William Carlos Williams (1884), who was equally unknown at about that time. Williams is nowhere mentioned in *A Second Flowering*, not even as part of the elder ambience, and is mentioned just once in an earlier Cowley book, *The Literary Situation*, where we are told only that he spent most of his time practicing medicine.

Cowley writes as though he'd never heard of Marianne Moore, he is exceedingly vague about whatever it was Pound may have accomplished (except coin the phrase "news that stays news" and teach Hemingway the doctrine of the Image), he is as blank about Stevens as about Williams, and is so little driven by impersonal rage at neglect that a truly scandalous neglect, that of Louis Zukofsky (born 1904) has wrung from him over the years, to the best of my knowledge, not so much as a mention of Zukofsky's name. No, he is a specialist, his practice limited to writers born within a six-year span, 1894–1900, which would be as comical as specializing in the left feet of Ashtabula topologists were it not for the special nature of the case: had he not known so many of these writers personally, known their world so intimately, and had theirs and his not been the most exactly defined generation in American literary history.

That was their real peculiarity, that they were a "generation." Boxed between the great innovators and the war, defined by being just old enough to respond as younger contemporaries to the former and not too old to have escaped being romantic about the latter ("You went to the war and it was like going to a theater that advertised the greatest spectacle in history"), the men of 1894–1900 combined a superficial experimentalism (leaving out capitals, putting whole paragraphs in italics) with the vulgar hopefulness that accompanied the dawn of the new century. They did more than that, but that describes them partly.

Not only his eight writers, recalls Cowley, but all their coevals—"those who were lucky enough to be born a little before the end of the last century"—spent much of their lives "feeling that the new century was about to be placed in their charge; it was like a business in financial straits that could be rescued by a timely change in management."

That was certainly how Hemingway and Fitzgerald felt about fiction, if not about the century. Fitzgerald in particular was to spend nine years trying to achieve, he said, "something really NEW in form, idea, and structure—the model for the age that Joyce and Stein are searching for, that Conrad didn't find." If he did not manage this, part of the difficulty, as we may learn from casting a cold eye on Sheila Graham's embarrassing memoir, *College of One*, was that apart from his astonishing feel for his craft he was virtually illiterate.

Appropriately, though, his feel for his craft included a feel for his time—Cowley calls it "a quality that very few writers are able to acquire: a sense of living in history." He was the seismograph of microchanges, and could tell 1926 from 1927 by a hundred indices, as surely as we can tell the twenties from the thirties. "Any given moment," he wrote, "has its value; it can be questioned in the light of after-events, but the moment remains."

He made fiction out of vanishing moments, and extracted the last pathos from the likes of his Tom Buchanan, who after the passing of the golden moment would "drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game." At the end of his best novel, Jay Gatsby floats dead in a leaf-strewn swimming pool as a direct consequence of refusing to believe that you can't bring back the past ("Why, of course you can!").

"But the moment remains." Has that a familiar ring? It has. Walter Pater too thought that the moment remained. "To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down." Such moments were to be preserved "simply for those moments' sake." So Pater wrote in 1868. His doctrine was powerful medicine in England in the nineties. John

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W. Aldridge, discussing Cowley's book in the November 1973 *Commentary*, pronounces that the Cowley writers "had one abiding interest, themselves when young," and that along with their creations they still project "the clarity of outline, the individuality, and the eternal openness which, as a rule, only young people of college age seem to possess." The surprising reason for this quality of theirs is that they were all, by election as well as by birth, men of the nineties, the true successors (transatlantic branch) of Walter Pater's disciples, of Dowson and Symons, Wilde and Lionel Johnson, the men of W.B. Yeats' "Tragic Generation." Having Joyce, Pound, and Eliot for mentors and the war for a public crucible serves to disguise this inheritance without reducing its latent power.

Hemingway, though he could reduce a magic moment to "Maria." "Yes." "Maria." "Yes." "Maria," could elsewhere be as eloquent as Walter Pater about what vanishes forever, telling us on the opening page of *A Farewell to Arms* how the water moved past the pebbles and the troops past the house, "and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees." The leaves, his narrator recalls, "fell early that year," and the soldiers marched by leaving "the road bare and white except for the leaves." They move as the stream moves, to fall as the leaves fall. Later the very army disintegrates, Frederic Henry is a different man forever, and Catherine Barkley dies of multiple hemorrhages. Of what else should anyone die, in such a book? Through it time pours, an unstanchable wound, and what memory and prose have fixed, as the nineties prescribed, is the brief being of what never again will be.

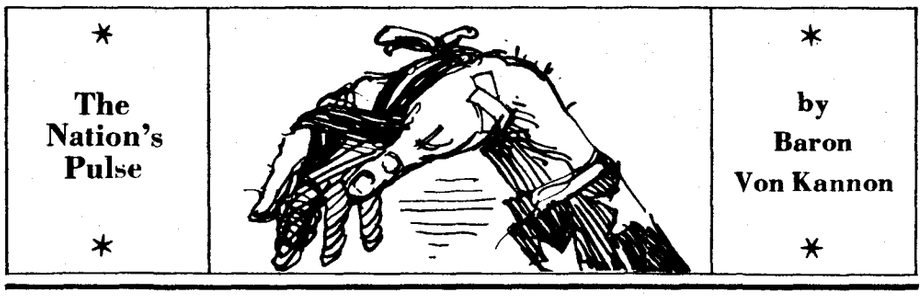
Faulkner's first writings were hand-me-down "nineties" poems. cummings and Dos Passos belonged to a Harvard group that called itself the Aesthetes and, Cowley tells us, tried "to create in Cambridge, Massachusetts, an after-image of Oxford in the 1890s." To that end, they ritually "discussed the music of Pater, the rhythms of Aubrey Beardsley, and, growing louder, the voluptuousness of the Roman Church and the essential sanctity of prostitutes." Lionel Johnson would have understood. Hart Crane's visible career—drunkenness, bisexuality, suicide—and also his poetic procedure—magpie connoisseurship of exotic words; systematic derangement of the senses—suggest a midwesterner's rowdy imitation of long-ago Chelsea decadence. (He lacked the style for it. "He smashed Montgomery Schuyler's collection of records and tried to throw the phonograph out of a second-story window. Then he shouted to Monte, 'My father is a millionaire. Who is *your* father?'")

Malcolm Cowley too is bent on recovering moments. His whole Crane chapter, an evocation sustained for twenty-five pages, calls up a *temps perdu* suffused with affection. (Compare the merely very skillful Wolfe chapter, where we always sense that the colorful anecdotage is coming at secondhand.) The book's longest views are taken at the beginning, in the chapters on Fitzgerald and Hemingway, where we learn on firsthand authority how it was in Paris, how the war seemed to Young Americans, how the peace seemed, what the act of writing seemed to imply. When Cowley is reliving his book is alive.

The question he raises in putting these chapters together with others less distinguished though necessary to his pattern is the question of the meaning of the pattern: what exactly that generation of his signified. A Second Flowering, he suggests at the end, to match the first flowering, in New England eighty years before. That needn't be claimed. It is more than enough for the honor of twentieth-century America that two Americans helped shape the great age in which Mr. Cowley's generation were the first-rank minor talents.

What can be claimed for them is that they availed themselves of a certain transatlantic detachment to transcend the premises of decadence as much as they did: that they made a substantial native literature out of wrecking their lives, in several instances, as thoroughly as many English lives had been wrecked in the decade of their birth, on principle but to no avail whatsoever. There is no English *Gatsby*, no English *In Our Time*. Minnesota and Michigan fueled the gem-like flames that crafted those books.

Hugh Kenner



Lynch Law and Moral Zeal

It must have been at a meeting of our local chapter of Common Cause where I first heard my high-minded colleague, Tyrrell, asseverate his famous maxim that "for American politicians moral zeal seems to have the properties of a hallucinatory drug or of Unitarianism, for whenever one is bitten by the stuff he generally becomes obsessively idiotic." At the time I first heard it I was struck by the collossal idealism of the remark, and now after months of witnessing the Senate's foremost civil libertarian in action I am convinced of our gentle editor's timeless wisdom.

Poor old Sam, for years he has defended the rights of individuals before the law, but inject a little moral zeal into him and before long he is afflicting his fellow citizens with the same kind of abuse that he once chastized Senator McCarthy for practicing. His Senate investigation may have accomplished many great and noble things. It may be the prodigy of the age, but I seriously doubt that it has done much to clarify the issues at stake in the Watergate spectacle. What is far more important, I believe that it has advanced still further the capability of government to intimidate, harass, and slander free and innocent men, the Bill of Rights notwithstanding. In the recent hearings, Senator Ervin, long a proud spokesman for civil liberties and due process, has personally dragged through the dirt the names of many innocent men without even allowing them the opportunity to defend those actions which he in his zeal has condemned.

A memorable example of Ervin's dishonorable behavior is the case of Tom Charles Huston, a young White House functionary who in 1970 put together a memorandum on a plan of government surveillance of foreign and domestic groups then threatening the country's security. Although the memorandum suggested no intrusion into domestic politics or Watergate-type activities, and even though Huston had left the White House in the spring of 1971, a full year before the Watergate break-in, Ervin and his colleagues apparently decided that the fact that Huston had once worked for the White House was *prima facie* evidence of his complicity in some comprehensive plot to turn America into Chile. As a result, Huston fell victim to the Senate Watergate Committee's nationally-televised ax, and his reputation has been eternally stained. The committee has given no indication that it will ever give Huston his day in court; rather, it has dragged his name into the Watergate mess as if he is indistinguishable from the average John Dean.

This is a grave misrepresentation, and despite the Ervin Committee's reluctance to do so, some things need to be set straight. In the first place the so-called Huston Plan was not a Watergate blueprint; it had nothing to do with party politics. In 1970 Huston, who was then the President's liaison man with American intelligence agencies, received the order to submit a proposal for keeping the Executive well-informed on the radical Left, which then seemed to be threatening the very workings of the government and had stopped the day-to-day operation of hundreds of colleges and universities.

President Nixon had been alarmed by this unprecedented violence and asked J. Edgar Hoover, Richard Helms, Admiral Noel Gyler, and General Richard Bennett to prepare a report on national security and

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to submit options for future policy. It was Huston's duty to summarize the report and to grade the suggested options. The resulting memo that fell into Senator Ervin's hands was not a plan authored by Huston. To refer to it as the Huston Plan is imprecise, misleading, and unfair to Huston.

The so-clalled Huston Plan recommended that the government establish a coordinated intelligence community to intensify coverage of individuals and groups which posed a major threat to internal security. The specific targets of this network included not the Democratic National Committee or any of the numerous Democratic presidential candidates, but violence-prone and student-related groups. The methods of intelligence gathering included monitoring the mail of selected targets, surreptitious entry to procure vitally needed foreign cryptographic material, wiretapping, and so on—all perfectly standard if in some cases infrequently used modes of intelligence gathering.

It must be remembered that the violent Left in 1970 was growing in prominence, numbers, and degree of violence at an alarming rate. During the 1969-70 school year alone, the U.S. Treasury Department estimates that as many as 2800 politically-inspired bombings of buildings occurred, resulting in millions of dollars of property damage and several deaths. According to other sources, during that same period radical violence managed to close some 500 colleges and universities. Protest demonstrations involved over 60 percent of the nation's college students, or over 4,350,000 people in over 9000 protests. In addition the late 1960s witnessed the formation and growth of militant black and Chicano movements. Over 2000 political demonstrations occurred in the nation's high schools. In 1969 the armed forces recorded a 25 percent increase in the desertion rate over the previous year.

Kirkpatrick Sale, in his recent book *SDS* (Random House, $15.00) documents much of the violent activity of the growing radical movement. In conclusion he says: "Political violence at the end of the decade . . . may not have brought about a revolution—but it was the closest thing to it that an ongoing society could imagine. Or perhaps endure." Huston observed the growth of the violent radicalism long before Kirkpatrick Sale wrote his book, but his plan to counter the violence was not at all the scheming of a wild-eyed reactionary. According to a *New York Times* interview with Huston on May 24, 1973, "a handful of people can't frontally overthrow the government. But if they can engender enough fear, they can generate an atmosphere that will bring out of the woodwork every repressive demagogue in the country. Unless this stuff was stopped, the country was going to fall into the wrong hands."

So it was in an attempt to spare the country from the threat of a violent clash between the New Left radicals and reactionary demagogues that Huston carried out White House directions and compiled his memorandum. The misconception which should be straightened out, then, is the idea that the so-called Huston Plan was a Watergate blueprint. On the contrary it was a proposal written in an extraordinary period of our history and intended to prevent violence and domestic strife. And it was a plan to streamline the American intelligence organization—something that had been advocated by thoughtful liberals for years. As a matter of fact, one of liberals' allegations against Edgar Hoover had long been that the FBI was involved in wasteful duplication of functions. Huston would have ended all this.

A second charge leveled against Huston's memo, to which Huston was not allowed a reply, is that the memo advocated policies that were illegal, unprecedented, and totally out of line, not only with previous Executive actions, but also with regard to the proper balance between presidential and congressional control over the various agencies of government. To these charges, one can only point out that they are based not on fact, but have gained credence simply because they have been made with no chance for reply.

In fact the proposals made by Huston—including those concerning wiretapping and surreptitious entry to procure needed documents—were legal in 1970 when they were made. The Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, allowed these sorts of activities until a Supreme Court decision of June 19, 1972, two years after Huston wrote his memorandum. Not only were the recommendations legal, but they had been widely practiced by the previous four presidents and their attorneys general. Finally, it's not Huston's fault that Congress eschewed its responsibility to control the CIA. On the contrary, if a real threat to the nation's security did exist in 1970, either from the violent Left or in the form of repressive reaction, *someone* had to offer a course of action. And Congress, in keeping with its recent practice of failing to act and at the same time bemoaning the fact that the Executive has become too powerful, did nothing.

Because the White House and Huston refused to do nothing, both have come under fire from the Monday-morning quarterbacks of the Ervin Committee. Because Huston's plan advocated the legal use of surreptitious entry and wiretapping to counter threats posed by violent domestic and subversive foreign groups, and then, two years later paid employees of CREEP used the same tactics for clearly illegal partisan political reasons, the implication has been made through a fantastic leap in logic that Huston was in some way responsible for the Watergate break-in.

Despite the fact that Huston was dealing with subversion, not party politics, despite the fact that Huston was not even distantly associated with Watergate, but was merely a twenty-nine-year-old liaison man with intelligence agencies who was attempting to do what liberals had been asking for years, Sam Ervin in all his back-country,

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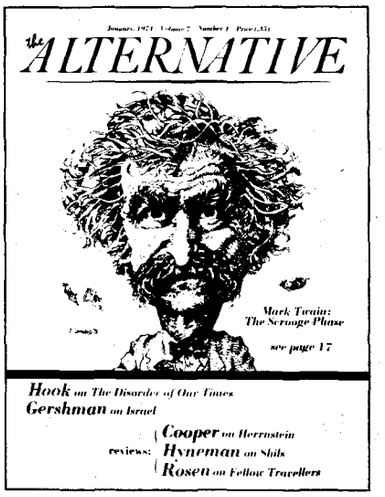

"The Alternative *unfailingly brightens every day on which it arrives. It is spirited, candid, and if sometimes amused then seriously so, because it deals with things that matter.*"
— Alexander M. Bickel

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Bible-quoting wisdom has marred Huston's record for life. Ervin and his committee have repeatedly dragged the "Huston Report" through the committee's proceedings without ever giving Huston an opportunity to respond. The fact that Huston's memo originated not with Huston but with the various intelligence agencies has yet to be mentioned. Nor does it seem to matter to Senator Ervin that his career has benefited from the testimony of an admitted perjuror whose transgressions against civil liberties are a matter of historical record. What seems to be taking place in Ervin's committee—at least with regard to Huston—is a remergence of lynch law, but I guess that was to be expected from a politico bitten by moral zeal. □

Book Review

Obscenity and Public Morality

by Harry M. Clor
University of Chicago $9.50
also in paperback $2.50

"Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."
—Edmund Burke

Writing home from the trenches of France in World War I, an unknown American soldier advised his son, "When a man begins to be certain, he begins to be a fool." Far from those battlefields and those times, we may grant that the soldier overstated his point. And yet, in an era of rampant ideological warfare, two of the rarer political virtues are apt to be prudence and humility. When barricades are raised and symptoms of decadence multiply, the appeal of all-purpose political panaceas often becomes irresistible.

Such a period was the late 1960s in America. Among large sectors of the population arose an antinomian mood of resistance to all tradition and all authority. With it appeared an uncompromising ideology of "do-your-own-thing," of pure and total *laissez-faire* as the sole principle of political (or antipolitical) philoslosophy. As the social fabric unraveled, such conservative ideals as moral consensus, individual self-control, and duty to others were frequently stigmatized as repressive, even totalitarian.

Nowhere, perhaps, was the new ideology more successful than in the field of obscenity and pornography. Only a few years ago the trend seemed inexorable. Supported by increasingly permissive Supreme Court rulings, the advocates of unfettered self-expression and the "new morality" appeared triumphant. As long as what we did was "honest," as long as it was done voluntarily and privately, as long as it supposedly did not interfere with others, who could object? To the strictures of moralists and traditional conservatives, the retort was blunt: "Mind your own business! What I do with my life is my own affair—not yours, and certainly not the government's."

Now, unexpectedly, the pendulum is swinging back. An intellectual counterrevolution has begun. Suddenly the Supreme Court has reversed itself; in *Miller v. California* (1973) Chief Justice Burger and the majority have rejected the notion that "anything goes" and instead sanctioned the suppression of some forms of obscenity. Among intellectuals, Irving Kristol, a leader of the "neo-conservatives," has written a memorable article, "Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship," in the *New York Times Magazine*. Kristol in turn has been strongly influenced by the Straussian political scientist Walter Berns, whose own important essay on the subject appeared in the *Public Interest* in 1971. Above all, the revived intellectual rationale for limited censorship has been articulated most thoroughly by a scholar named Harry Clor in a book already recognized as a classic in the field. Published in 1969 and more recently in paperback, *Obscenity and Public Morality* is an indispensable book for all who seek to establish a free yet civilized society.

Clor begins with an analysis of Supreme Court decisions from the *Roth* case (1957) to *Ginzburg* (1966). He is distressed by recurrent difficulties in the Court's thinking as well as by the increasingly permissive cast of its findings during that period. Clor sharply criticizes the Justices for their failure to confront the case *for* regulation of obscenity—a case, he says, which is "nowhere examined and nowhere refuted" by the Court. "Judges," he warns, "cannot reasonably assume, without argument, that obscenity is harmless to individuals and to society just because it is indulged in voluntarily and in private."

If the decisions of the Warren Court are murky and inadequate, where can we turn for guidance? Not, Clor insists, to the principles of inflexible, unmodified libertarianism. The remainder of his book may best be described as a long and formidable demolition of one objection after another to the moderate but necessary restraints on expression which Clor advocates. First, he analyzes the argument of Justices Black and Douglas that the Constitution absolutely prohibits censorship. To be sure, the First Amendment states that Congress shall make "no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech." Yet, Clor replies, the Constitution does not specify precisely what an "abridgement" may be or what the Founders actually considered to be "the freedom of speech." The meaning of the First Amendment, he argues, is neither self-evident nor self-defining. It is up to judges to decide whether a "slight restraint" upon speech really constitutes an "abridgement" of the overall "freedom of speech." Here Clor seems to be on solid ground. The Supreme Court has consistently held for a generation that "obscene matter" is not protected by the First Amendment. This point, said Justice Burger recently, is "categorically settled."

Clor next proceeds to explode a number of misconceptions about the Founding Fathers' views on free speech. He cites Leonard Levy's contention that the very men who adopted the supposedly "absolute" First Amendment actually left in place federal prosecutions for seditious libel. He points out that Madison and Jefferson, the most libertarian of the Founders, regarded the First Amendment as a restriction on Congress only; it certainly did not prevent the states from limiting "licentious speech." Madison and Jefferson were wary of censorship, Clor notes, "but they did not deny that a power to restrain some forms of expression must reside somewhere in government." Clor further demonstrates that the Founders were primarily concerned with political and religious speech; we simply do not know what they thought or intended about obscenity. In this area we must interpret the Constitution for ourselves.

Yet even if Clor establishes that obscenity control is arguably constitutional, he still must answer the objection that obscenity is not a political problem at all, that it has no harmful effects on other people or the community. After a meticulous scrutiny of the current data, Clor concludes that the evidence is mixed. Both sides can cite experts and studies to support some of their contentions, while on many points reliable evidence is not available. Still, some judgments are possible. Clor is particularly skeptical of some libertarian arguments, such as the "tenuous and disputed theory" that obscenity operates as a "safety valve." He criticizes libertarians for their superficial exploration of possible "long-range effects of obscenity upon mind and character." And for all the uncertainty of the specialists, surely everyone would agree that children can be influenced substantially by what they read and hear. And if children, why not also adults? If, as everyone would admit, adults can be affected by good literature, why not by evil literature? *Obviously* the average man can be moved by what he reads, and that includes obscenity. Massive infusions of obscenity into society might well help to "desensitize" citizens and to subvert the "convictions" and feelings that support "moral standards." Clor argues forthrightly that "the widespread circulation of obscenity, particularly when legally protected, can so affect the moral atmosphere of the average man that virtuous dispositions are inhibited and vicious ones encouraged." In short, no one has decisively proven that "salacious literature" *directly* affects overt conduct. But

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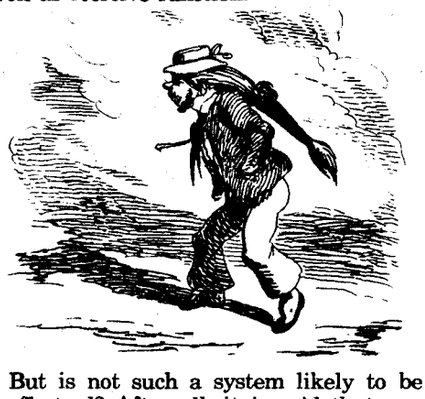
that is not the "most socially significant" problem. It is the long-term, indirect, hard-to-measure *moral* effects of obscenity that are crucial. And here Clor, while moderate, is unequivocal: "Obscenity can contribute to the debasement of moral standards and ultimately of character."

"So what?" says the indignant libertarian. Regardless of obscenity's effects, he would contend, it is simply not the business of government to enforce ethical standards or mold character. Here we come to what Clor recognizes as the key issue: "What is the public interest in moral norms and moral character, and how is that interest best served?" Clor presents three possible rationales for censorship. First, there is the Aristotelian argument that civil society exists not merely to preserve men's life, liberty, and property, but to foster the *good* life and the highest ends of man's being. To be fully human, men must discipline their passions, and for this task the law is indispensable. As Walter Berns puts it, "the formation of character is the principal duty of government," and one tool of law is censorship. Second, there is the contention, advanced by Ernest van den Haag, that society—any society—requires cohesion and consensus to survive. In order to protect itself against threats to its shared values (whatever they may be), a society may properly resort to censorship. A third rationale—which Clor finds the most compatible with modern liberal democracy—holds that certain "minimal moral requisites" exist for the "proper performance of political and social duties." It is perfectly correct for government to become "concerned with such morality as a precondition for the willingness or capacity of men to contribute to the common tasks and interests of a community." Society is not "an autonomous, self-regulating entity" which will automatically develop and protect a moral code. Civilized societies act (and must act) through the "political community," whose means of expression is law. Law is a powerful and essential factor in the crystalizing of moral sentiments.

Again and again Clor reiterates these fundamental arguments. A decent society, even a liberal and democratic polity, requires a moral matrix in order to function. As the Founding Fathers knew, to sustain a republic you must have a republican morality. Self-government requires the cultivation of self-restraint; "a nation of sensualists" will lack the requisite virtues for effective citizenship.

In making his case, Clor is obliged to refute a host of libertarian objections. Why, for example, is *government* necessary for the maintenance of minimal morality? Why can't public opinion, the family, and the church sustain our standards? Because, Clor replies, none of them is sufficient. Public opinion is not "a self-dependent moral agent"; it is frequently "unstable, uncertain, and transitory." Moreover, to the extent that public opinion is solid, this is, in part, precisely because of the reinforcement provided by law. As for the family, it is simply not "an autonomous social force capable of independently generating and sustaining values." It is unrealistic to expect that the home could hold out unaided against a corrupt "moral environment" around it. And while the churches are valuable, they are not and cannot now be a "predominant influence upon character in modern society." This leaves the law, which can fill several useful roles. Statutes against obscenity can "contain" some of the evil influences besetting us; they can symbolize "a moral decision of the community"; they can "clarify and define" community standards. Since a truly civil society depends on virtue among its citizens, it cannot passively hope that "fortuitous circumstances and chance influences" will somehow produce the desired results. "The moral character of a society is a matter of vital public interest."

But why, objects the libertarian, must the law concern itself with "mere" words? Why not confine itself to the punishment of antisocial acts when they occur? Clor replies that coercion alone will not deter such acts unless the law is also attentive to "the conditions which breed indecent men." If government really wishes to control evil conduct, then "it cannot be indifferent" to those influences which undermine moral restraints on conduct. It is "neither reasonable nor safe" for a society to do nothing until vicious acts are committed or are about to be committed. If you wait till then, you have waited too long. The law has a legitimately preventative as well as coercive function.



But is not such a system likely to be ineffectual? After all, it is said that you cannot legislate morality and that genuine virtue depends on free choice. Clor admits that the highest virtue does indeed arise from voluntary acts. But that is largely beside the point. For the "capacity for voluntary self-discipline and right choice" does not develop spontaneously in a vacuum. Most people *learn* to do right, and then only by "a long process of moral training and habituation." Censorship in itself, of course, will not make us virtuous, but it can improve the "moral environment" in which we live.

Clor repeatedly asserts what many find it difficult to acknowledge: that we live in a civil *society*, that a "public interest" must be actively sought, and that (to borrow from Russell Kirk) "order in the soul" and "order in the commonwealth" are deeply interrelated. Clor rejects the libertarian division of life into a tiny public sphere and an expansive, inviolate private sphere. In obvious disagreement with Frank Meyer's fusionism, for example, he argues that it is impossible to ascertain with finality the limits on governmental intervention. It is impossible to define absolutely distinct "moral enclaves" into which the law can never intrude. The way men live—their "moral character"—*is* a matter of concern to others and to the society in which we all live.

Nor does Clor accept the common libertarian assumption that an "autonomous civilizing or socializing process" will produce a viable morality or polity. Fifty years ago Irving Babbitt declared, "Civilization is something that must be deliberately willed; it is not something that gushes up spontaneously from the unconscious." Clor would emphatically agree. And, he would add, civilization does not inevitably follow the spread of knowledge and freedom. "No large body of men," he warns, "can be continuously bound together on the sole basis of the principle that values are a matter of personal choice." Push a society to such extremes, and you will make community life "extremely tenuous."

Absolute individual freedom, then, cannot be the exclusive goal of the political order. For self-government to succeed, "civility" is essential, and it will not be attained if the ethic of self-sacrifice is scorned and sensual self-indulgence obsessively cultivated. Censorship, Clor admits, is not a democratic measure, but it is one which is necessary to the success of a democracy. The doctrinaire who myopically demands only more freedom does not understand that for liberty to flourish, a "*regime* conducive to liberty" must be maintained. An ideology that exalts freedom, noble though it may be, is not enough. The moral and political *conditions* of freedom must be protected. An ethically relativistic philosophy of self-gratification will never be sufficient for this task.

By now some apprehensive readers have no doubt consigned Clor to the dark realm of authoritarianism. (This reviewer has met individuals for whom the very ideas of a "public interest" or a "social good" suggest Nazism.) But Clor is definitely not an ignorant or rabid zealot. Instead, the tone of his book is remarkably sober, judicious, and fair. Far from advocating indiscriminate censorship, Clor emphasizes his commitment to liberal democracy and frequently stresses that curbs on obscenity must always be justified, scrutinized, and democratically controlled. Government invention of and promulgation of an ideology by means of law, for example, would never be permissible. Ideas and arguments about sex—as distinguished from obscenity (which is hardly an exchange of "ideas")—should not be curtailed. "Legitimate censorship" aims not at all literature which might have an evil impact but fundamentally at "the most vicious materials." Clor devotes an entire chapter to the development of a reasonable of "obscenity." As a student of Joseph Cropsey and Herbert Storing of the University of Chicago, he evidently belongs to the school of the late Leo Strauss. Certainly this book—in its meticulous analysis and political philosophy—bears the marks of Straussian scholarship.

Not everyone will applaud Clor's book. Skeptics will wonder whether censorship can work in practice as highmindedly and efficaciously as Clor would wish. And while he denies that censorship of obscenity must lead to ever-widening repression (it did not happen in the late nineteenth century—many a libertarian's golden age), many readers will continue to distrust the State as an instrument of reform. Clor would have strengthened his argument by a more

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precise analysis of the ways that obscenity actually undermines republican morality. How, to borrow Burke's phrase, do the passions of intemperate men forge their fetters? It is not that his arguments are weak; they are not. He suggests, for example, that obsession with sensual gratification can weaken the "higher faculties" essential to "self-control and social responsibility" and lead to a self-centered withdrawal of energy from crucial public concerns. These are very plausible propositions. But more historical evidence—drawn, perhaps, from contemporary Sweden and Denmark—might have buttressed an already powerful case.

Yet no author can do everything. And surely Clor in one incisive book has done enough. He has written an excellent reaffirmation of traditional conservative doctrines and a forceful critique of philosophical permissiveness. All too often conservative thought on obscenity is caricatured as prudish and philistine at best, or intolerant and fascistic at worst. Clor has altered the terms of a perennial debate.

And in the process he has raised questions that transcend the single issue of indecent literature. How "open" can a society become before it ceases to be a civilized society at all? Can a good and livable civilization be built on the principle of deliberate indifference to our fellow human beings? Would a society of "pure" freedom and "self-interest" be a blissful utopia of peaceful exchange or a Hobbesian jungle of incipient civil war? As a wise saying in the Talmud observes: if I do not think of myself, no one else will. But if I think of myself only, what kind of man am I?

Readers of Clor's book might well add: If we the people incessantly think of ourselves only, what kind of society will we have? And who in the end would really want to live there?

George Nash

Book Review

The Politics of Normalcy

by Robert K. Murray
Norton $6.95
also in paperback $2.65

In the era of Watergate, no comparisons in American history come more readily to mind than those taken from the Harding era. Amid talk of corruption in high places, with great exposés the daily fare of American citizens, people are searching their vague memories of the past for comparisons and precedents which provide insights or guides to the confusion of the moment. In a happy accident, Robert K. Murray has published his second book on the Harding era. It is a happy accident for several reasons: accident, of course, because the work was in progress long before the revelations of Watergate, and fortunate because Murray has established himself as perhaps the foremost scholar on the first American decade after the Great War of 1914–1918, and is consequently a man who can write with real authority on an era that somehow became famous (infamous?) without becoming well or truly known.

Only four years ago, Murray published his voluminous biography of Harding. Fresh from long researches in the Harding papers and associated collections, he sought to eradicate a number of the myths grown up around the Harding presidency and to extend materially the body of knowledge concerning Harding's political ideas, economic policies, and his work in politics. It was a highly successful effort, and one may wonder why Murray has followed it up so soon with another book so nearly on the same subject. In *The Politics of Normalcy*, Murray has purposed to write a shorter, looser, and more reflective treatment of the Harding era, and has extended his considerations beyond Harding's own administration, so as to evaluate the characteristics of Harding's programs and ideas as they finally matured under Coolidge after Harding's untimely demise.

In *The Politics of Normalcy*, Murray has written much that is useful, only a little that is less good. The book itself is engaging, quick-paced, fluently if not elegantly written, informative as well as analytical—in short, just the kind of book that one might want to give to his undergraduates to read (which is exactly what Murray and the Norton company undoubtedly have in mind). What remains to disturb the reader appears not in the body of the book, but in the author's foreword. Murray's sustained insistence that he is leading the field in Harding scholarship is less appropriate in his own foreword than it would be in the words of another writer, though perhaps it seems necessary to him when within the space of several years a number of major books on Harding have appeared. It is likewise unfortunate that Murray's promises of deeply reflective rethinking and new analytical excursions, made in the foreword, seem exaggerated after the book has been read.

These reservations aside, Murray has undeniably extended his thoughts beyond the point he had reached in the more detailed and narrative biography, and in many respects has done a fine job. His concluding chapter on the fulfillment of the normalcy program under Coolidge aptly completes the clear and attractive opening development of normalcy in the early chapters. But much that deserved deep thought and analysis in the problems of government in the Harding era are untouched in this volume. The implications of governmental growth during the war, the new functions assumed and retained, the expansion of federal service and its transformation into a modern bureaucracy —no account of governmental practice in the 1920s can be complete without assessing these developments. One can only hope that Murray, whose knowledge of his era is peerless, will fill this lacuna in coming years.

Meanwhile Murray has opportunely provided a brief summary of Harding's personality, mind, intentions, and presidency. In the present moment, when it is so tempting to draw on the twenties for illustrative analogy to contemporary political phenomena, the book is especially thought-provoking, and serves in a way Murray never intended as a corrective for careless quasi-historical thinking about the decade of the twenties, and by extension, the seventies. Murray's portrait of Harding is striking for the few parallels with Nixon's presidency, rather than for the many. Harding was affable, gregarious, friendly, and generous. He disliked contention and crisis, and "regarded compromise and conciliation as superior to argument and disagreement. Disagreement forestalled the resolution to problems while compromise enhanced it." Murray remarks that loyalty ranked high in Harding's values, and quotes one of Harding's acquaintances: "He liked politicians for the reason that he loved dogs, because they were usually loyal to their friends." Harding's presidential idol was William McKinley, and he was suspicious of presidential power and reluctant to exercise it. Humble, Harding felt it necessary to rely on and to consult with the "best minds" of his party, for in his view, the president was not the embodiment of the mystical will of the people, nor even the foremost leader of his own party.

Because he knew his own limitations, Harding never aspired to be the best president the country had ever had, nor even one of the great. More charmingly, though not perhaps more modestly, he hoped above all to be the best loved American president. Despite the political strife of his administration, the scandals erupting as he grew ill, Harding's death occasioned a great outpouring of affection in the American people, and he achieved his ambition in death as he could never have done in life. Although his ambition belongs to a time gone by, to an age more innocent, simpler than our own, in the swirling disputes and contentions of the seventies, Harding's naive aim should evoke more than the cynicism, much more than the derision and contempt with which, as Murray notes, Harding and his era have for the most part been treated by historians. Harding's desire deserves respect and reflection, for it permits assessment not only of how far the nation and the presidency have come in aspiration and in fact, but of how great the loss when gentle humanity, modesty, and conciliatory spirit are no more found in the nation's high offices.

Thomas Etzold

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Brudnoy's Film Index

■ **American Graffiti**: 1962, the hop, rock'n roll, four lads and their lassies; *the* nostalgia flick of the year, and—your servant predicts—an Oscar nominee before long.

■ **Day for Night**: Truffaut's song to the cinema, an intricate but easy ramble through the ironies of movie-making within the well-made movie. A french connection you should make.

■ **The Don is Dead**: Serves him right, too. With Anthony Quinn, the Mexican-Greek-Irish-Sicilian, spreading. He is *too* much, as they say in the Family.

■ **England Made Me**: From Graham Greene's 1935 novel, transposed from Stockholm to Berlin, this tale of a scoundrel adrift in a world of same stars Michael York, and he's a pip. One of the few films of the month that commands attention. You *will* follow orders!

■ **Executive Action**: You see, fellow fascists, the right wing killed Kennedy in 1963. Will Geer, Burt Lancaster, and Robert Ryan play out Dalton Trumbo's, Donald Freed's, and Mark Lane's little fantasy, setting up the innocent Oswald as a patsy. They get their man, incidentally, in case you've forgotten, and any delta-minus semi-moron under the mental age of one will believe every word of this unspeakably trashy vulgarization of the president's death. But of course it happened just that way; it always does; the right wing always assassinates everyone. Remember Sirhan Sirhan? Maybe Trumbo, Freed, and Lane can take on that one next.

■ **Hurry Up, or I'll be 30**: Splendid tale of a young man desperate to make it—*anything*—before that magic turning point. Funny, unpretentious, comes very close to what it's like.

■ **I.F. Stone's Weekly**: Izzy redivivus; an hour and two minutes of the indefatigable left-wing journalist going about his business. His journal is now kaput, but he contributing-edits the *New York Review of* (Each Other's) *Books*, so take heart. Izzy in a tizzy forever and evermore.

■ **Jeremy**: Still hanging in there; the teenie-boppers making it in Spraypaint Village. Treacly, perhaps, but a pleasant diversion.

■ **Jesus Christ Superstar**: Familiar story, uncommonly well-made variety thereof.

■ **Jonathan Livingston Seagull**: Our feathered friend flying high. Watch out for the droppings; this one is so full of it that it deserves a special award, one I cannot bestow in a family magazine. You dig?

■ **Last Tango in Paris**: All right already, it has obviously settled in for the decade. All proceeds now go to the Mugwump Indian Reservation, which has made Brando a brother: "Rumble Rump," they call him. Ugh.

■ **The New Land**: Conclusion to Jan Troel's two-part epic (first part: 1972's *The Emigrants*); over five hours, both halves, detailing a Swedish family's remove to America in the 1850s. Incomparably the finest treatment of the great European folk migration to the United States in the nineteenth century. Stunning performances by Max von Sydow, Liv Ullmann, Eddie Axberg, and Minnesota. Must see.

■ **The Paper Chase**: Harvard Law School comes in for the *Love Story* treatment once more. The prof gets all the best lines. Harvard, it is reliably reported, will survive.

■ **Robin Hood**: The Disney version, with cute little animals. No *Fritz the Cat*, this.

■ **Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams**: Joanne Woodward and Martin Balsam super in this story of an aging couple trying to make sense out of it all. A "women's picture," but not for women only. Woodward is especially fine, as always.

■ **Walking Tall**: Reissued story of a Southern sheriff cleaning out the baddies. Feeds on the American blood-lust; tremendously popular with the red-neck mentality; an unconscionably violent picture that, alas, works. □

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 3)

bar and for whom the American electorate recently showed such record-breaking disrelish. The number of voters who honor themselves as Independents grows every year, while the political beliefs of Americans become increasingly vague. Americans live under a government that has more than tripled in size in the past decade. It is enormous, it is supposed to accomplish great feats, and it is incompetent even to deliver the mail. Government has been marinated in corruption, and it abounds with contradictions. Reformers score it for being unresponsive, but when voters express themselves overwhelmingly on issues like busing and spending, the reformers demand that government's representatives ignore them. Reformers whip up enthusiasms for egalitarianism and participation, and then they hand over power to bureaucracies and commissions where elitism and insularity are unavoidable. They suggest enlarged government to monitor the lives of a citizenry upon whose freedom's they are forever rhapsodizing. And yet today government is increasingly unable to govern, usually because of the intrusions of these busybody reformers who are simultaneously for government and against it. Such conditions are bound to breed bewilderment, discontent, and instability.

And so we come to our own royal governor and his relations with his legislature and with his Opposition press. Mindful of all the contradictions and changes bestirring American society, no one should be surprised that the Congress is shot through with discord. Furthermore, it has limped along under the kind of leadership one might expect from a branch of government that for years has willingly allowed power to seep from it into the executive branch. But prolonged war and the vapors of ideology have suddenly induced the solons to grab for their lost power, and it is a monument to the perversity of our time that the very ideology that has mustered them from their snooze is the ideology that once seduced them to slumber. Liberalism spent forty years evangelizing for presidential power and now to its apostasy it has brought the same old religious zeal. Today it is leading the mob outside the executive palace. Today our illustrious royal governor finds himself in the same pickle as old Lord Bellomont, the late Governor of the the late colony of New York. Though feeble, he is feared by a suspicious, fractious, and leaderless legislature that wishes he would pack his bags. Once again the legislature engages the royal governor in an endless series of feuds which prevent normal political relations, political stability, and moderate leadership. And once again immoderate politics reigns, most obviously at the White House but also in the Congress. Charges of conspiracy, corruption, and tyranny are in the air. The royal governor possesses an awesome array of formal powers that scares hell out of his adversaries, but bereft of his predecessor's informal powers over Congress, he remains ineffectual and blundering.

Now this is an unsatisfying bit of news to those who have been telling us since 1970 of the imminence of presidential dictatorship. Nevertheless, Mr. Theodore White has made it a matter of historical record that Mr. Nixon's first administration was hamstrung by a recalcitrant bureaucracy, and a Congress that allowed him exactly one of his legislative jewels. As for his impotence in the second administration, it is a matter of daily record. Now some of Mr. Nixon's antagonists tell us he is about to call out the troops. Well I await that day with eager expectation. Twenty-four hours before the order goes out Xerox copies of it will be in the editorial offices of every newspaper from New York City to Needles, California. The military will be out of gas.

At any rate, all the elements of the colonial struggle are in place today. Our society abounds with discontinuities. Our royal governor, apparently powerful and menacing, provokes our Congress and our press to suspicion and excess, and then responds in kind. An intemperate, abnormal politics ensues that is an epiphenomenon of an unstable society.

The fevers of the earlier period lasted nearly a century, and who is to say that today's struggle between royal governors in Washington and the Congress will not last as long? The only thing that is certain now is that when this time of presidential agony is finally over, American democratic process will be far different than it has been in the past. My hope is that it is not a far different country.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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The Bootblack Stand

George Washington Plunkitt

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at avant-garde *bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled* What's in It for Me? *Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.*

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Oh, gee, I have a terrible problem. I don't know how to tell my daddy that I'm the cause of his crisis (No. 33), the missing tapes. I didn't know what they were and Julie had just brought over the new Ray Conniff album she and David got at the PX. I just used one of the tape recorders the Secret Service had around for "Side 1" and another tape for "Side 2". Do you think Judge Sirica would like to hear the tapes? Do you think he likes Ray Conniff?

T. Cox

Dear Ms. Cox:

By all means send him the tapes. The poor man hasn't had a good night's sleep in weeks.

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Do you still have faith in the American political system? In recent months I have begun to lose faith in the whole, dirty business!

John W. Dean, III

Dear Mr. Dean:

So good of you to take time out of a busy television schedule to drop me a line! Of course I still have faith in the American political system. As my old friend Charlie Wilson has pointed out so well, the system has done immense good for General Motors. (I have not done too badly myself.) The problem has arisen because of an attempt to reform the system. I note, for example, that you began your remarkable career as the associate director of the National Commission on Reform of Federal Criminal Laws. In a sense, I suppose, you're now getting a chance to do some solid field work in this important area. Let us say simply that any 26-year-old associate director in charge of a staff serving such luminaries as California's "Pat" Brown and the Illustrious Sam Ervin should have gotten the message a lot earlier than you did. One should limit one's zeal in both reforming and milking the system; you, sadly, were immoderate in both.

My best to your lovely wife, whose presence at your side and in front of the cameras probably got 15 years knocked off your forthcoming field research.

—GWP

Book Review

The Young Mencken

The Best of His Work

collected by Carl Bode
Dial $15.00

"Yes," said the veteran Washington correspondent Arthur Krock, speaking of *The Alternative*, "it has a Menckenian touch." Meaning, of course, that its reverences and irreverences are set forth in a saucy vocabulary ("tony dolts," "patheticoes," "moron ACLU lawyer") that would have delighted the Baltimore denigrator of the *gelehrten* whose early works have been exhumed by Carl Bode from newspaper and magazine files to make up a beautiful book called *The Young Mencken*.

It is fitting that a new Menckenian organ exists in the land to give hospitality to this book which exposes, in a leisurely unfolding, the growth of a great original. Before the coming of Mencken there was only academic criticism in the United States, and it was dull, dull, dull. The academics of my youngest years sneered at people who, as the saying had it, got their education in public, but if it had not been for a whole generation of newspapermen who took to book reviewing, building up their backgrounds as they went, it is doubtful that we would ever have had the literature of the twenties and the thirties. Have the newspaper critics been forgotten? Burton Rascoe, Floyd Dell, Francis Hackett, Harry Hansen, all out of Chicago? Mencken's *Smart Set* sidekick, George Jean Nathan? The ebullient steeplejack of the *Seven Arts*, James Gibbons Huneker? These and many others lacked formal credentials, but they brought gusto to criticism, created readers by the dozen, and gave that miraculous impetus to the Knopfs, the Heubsches, the Pat Covicis, the Albert Bonis, and the Horace Liverights of the new publishing companies that sprang up in the earliest twenties like flowers in Baja California after a rain.

Mencken was the best of the newspaper-trained critics, and I think, in my condition of galloping gafferism, that it was he who saved my generation from the perils of turning politicians into gods. We read him in the anarchistic years just after Versailles, when one laughed at Cal Coolidge. When Mencken praised Coolidge for turning the White House into a peaceful dormitory, we thought it a superb piece of satire. Little did we note that Mencken meant every word of it when he credited Silent Cal with reviving the lost world of Thomas Jefferson. Appreciating Mencken for his manner more than for his libertarian matter, we went on into the thirties, actually voting for the planners who planned us into the forty-year inflation that shows no signs of abating. But something of Mencken's distrust of the politico stuck, and when Albert Jay Nock, Rose Wilder Lane, Isabel Paterson, and later, Murray Rothbard came along with their reasoned variations on the theme of Our Enemy, the State, we were ready to recover our nerve and, along with it, our tradition.

Mr. Bode's collection of the young Mencken's news articles, Sunday features, *Baltimore Sun* "Free Lance" columns, epigrams, *Smart Set* reviews, Kiplingesque poems, Dreiserian fiction, and essays on American manners and morals makes us privy to the evolution of a style. Also of an education. Mencken was always good-humored, feisty, and beery, but his latter-day trick of delivering the most outrageous statements as if they were the soberest truth had to be cultivated. Talking about Nietzche in 1908, Mencken is just a competent neophyte. But when he writes an essay for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1914 called "The Mailed Fist and Its Prophet," using Nietzche as an excuse to get into the subject of post-Bismarck Germany, the prose moves with a zing and a zest that shows Mencken has finally mastered his medium. Mencken, a German by ancestry

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and by a genuine passion for *gemütlichkeit*, rather hoped the Kaiser would win his war. Well, the Kaiser, unlike Hitler, was at least a gentleman, so we can excuse the Mencken wish even though we deplore it. The point to be made here is that by 1914 Mencken had achieved his style. He was no longer "just a newspaperman."

The new words come like pellets along about page 358 of Mr. Bode's gatherings. Hunkerous tumbles after brummagem, saints and succubi contend for the heathen, and snoutery is abroad in the land. Amateur Messiahs strive to convert osseocaputs, and a common beating becomes a rowelling. The German words and phrases—wille zur macht, saufschwester, katzenjammer—are sprinkled around like paprika. But the Teuton learning is deployed as humor, not as pretentiousness, and a gorgeous buffoonery masks the serious thrust.

Mencken fought the booboisie (the word was his coinage), and, though the boobs are still with us and congregate daily around the boob tube, he succeeded in leavening the lump. Maybe he succeeded too well. The enemy today is the intellectualoid)*The Alternative*'s coinage), which means that some of the booboisie have been educated beyond their intelligence. The critical scene has passed back into the hands of the professors, some of them worthy. But the worthies tend to be specialists, called upon by our book supplement editors once and twice a year to set forth esoteric matter. We could stand some of those self-educated newspapermen of the teens and the twenties who became the Burton Rascoes, the Francis Hacketts, and the H.L. Menckens of an era that gave us identifiable critics who contributed an exciting continuity to the reviews that are no more.

John Chamberlain

Wanting Out, But Not Getting Out

Towards the last days of the Weimar Republic a series of films emerged onto the screens of Germany. They were stories of people who were trapped in meaningless, boring jobs and tried to escape. Bank clerks and secretaries turned to lives of crime and passion. They dropped out. Middle class people, just up from peasant status shed their sleazy coats of respectability and took to life on the streets. Always and inevitably, their attempts to escape turned to tragedy. The streets turned murderous and cruel. The enticements of low-life turned out to be hollow and mocking.

The Blue Angel is only the most famous of a whole series of these movies. Emil Jannings' pathetic schoolteacher chases the alluring but vicious Marlene Dietrich, a dancer named "Lola-Lola." He gives up his job, his respect, his pitiful financial security. And in the end he is reduced to playing a minor role in a cheap cabaret act, clucking like a rooster to drunken and contemptuous audiences.

Siegfried Kracauer said that these films represented a thorough schizophrenia in German life. The hatred of authority and fear of lack of order would eventually lead to a society which would respond to the conflicting wishes by ostensibly smashing the old symbols of authority and substituting a new, more exciting social order which would combine discipline with newness. That was called National Socialism.

Several current movies are so similar in theme to those pre-apocalypse German movies that they deserve to provoke some thought, and they do. The movies are *Blume In Love, Get To Know Your Rabbit* and *Your Three Minutes Are Up.* All of them involve catastrophically poor acting and often direction that must be called cheap. But they have all attracted attention and cannot be dismissed as a complete coincidence. Unfortunately, for the historian in us, the lessons of these films are more appropriate for soap opera than for high dramatic tragedy.

Your Three Minutes Are Up is the most straightforward of the group. It is a tastelessly told tale of the attempted escape of a young clerk (Jeff Bridges) from his job, his shrewish fiancée, and the life of consumer credit. It is almost embarrassingly simple-minded (and frankly I suspect it was made for television). Bridges works in a huge office in a forest of desks. His fiancée is constantly harping on what furniture and appliances they will get after they are married, and telling him to work harder, when he does not want to work at all.

He goes on the lam from Los Angeles up Route 1 and makes it as far as Monterey before the whole thing comes unglued. His fiancée finds him in bed with prostitutes. He has become more greedy and dishonest than the petty crook who led the escape, and he finally becomes so intoxicated with the power of dishonest thinking that he murders a gasoline station operator who will not take his expired credit card.

We last glimpse him sitting in his mortgaged Mustang convertible by the side of the road, weeping hysterically and obviously meant for a bad end.

His was not the story of a rich prince seeking to live like his subjects. He was essentially a lower-middle class person desperately being pushed into something closer to middle class status. It was the discipline and demands of his life which were killing him, not its indolence or remoteness from the life of the masses. He wanted the car and the girls and the money. He did not want the work.

In a sense that gives the story a lifelike quality which would certainly not have been imparted by the acting or direction. Those of us who have longed to break out have generally not been escaping from Palm Beach, but more likely from nine-to-five and installment credit.

Bridges, like most of us, is perfectly capable of wanting out, but not of getting out. That lends a certain poignancy to the movie which is about equivalent in depth to that felt when watching Lassie go to the rescue. His flare-up and doom could have been arranged so that they would have seemed to be inevitable results of his character. But that would have required careful acting and direction of his persona from the very beginning of the film and that was more than the film could muster.

Blume In Love does muster an extraordinary acting performance from its star, Susan Anspach. She is such a thoroughly repulsive attempted drop-out that she gives the viewer real pain in watching her, akin to the pain we feel in the presence of real people.

Anspach begins the movie as a liberal social worker marching for Cesar Chavez. She soon marries liberal Beverly Hills lawyer George Segal. Then she leaves him over a trivial incident and becomes involved for a lengthy period with Kris Kristofferson, playing himself as he always wanted to be, a freewheeling hippie minstrel.

Anspach continues to work to support him. But her life changes. She drives a pickup truck *and* a convertible. She acts condescending and arrogant in ankle-length rather then knee-length dresses. She smokes pot and sneers instead of drinking martinis and sneering.

Her attempt at flight becomes a colossal disaster when Kristofferson leaves her and she returns to Segal. Her fate is worse even than Bridges in *Your Three Minutes Are Up.* He might have looked forward to undergoing electro-shock and having his personality altered. She, on the other hand, will clearly have to complete her life, prolonged unnaturally by health foods and yoga, as herself.

Again, although Susan Anspach lived in Beverly Hills, she was living in Westwood by the skin of her teeth, not in Belair. Her movement was not to a completely different or even radically different way of life, but rather to the best parts of her old way of life (the car, the house, the clothes) together with the best parts of her new life (being able to feel contemptuous towards her former friends). →

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Anspach was not trying to develop a new way of life. Rather, she was trying, like Bridges, to have all the good things, mainly material, of the old way, without any of the discipline (in her case, the discipline of having to seem like everyone else). And like Bridges, Anspach comes to grief.

Unlike the character played by Bridges, however, Anspach's character obviously, from the very beginning, is one which will never be suitable for the realm of the free and the beautiful. Her own internal fears and rages prevent any relaxation of the rigid discipline she must maintain at all times to keep herself from being overwhelmed by the flood around her. Her attempts to be a gentle, hippie-esque type are like trying to turn a German shepherd into a mouse, or vice versa.

Only in *Get To Know Your Rabbit* is there any consistent success in the leading character's attempts to break out. Tom Smothers plays a young "junior executive" about to be completely swamped by his corporate responsibilities. He is engaged to a voluptuous but desperately conformist girl who leaves him when he quits his job to learn to be a tap-dancing magician. (In all three of these movies, as well as in too many other movies to count, the lover of the protagonist is a powerfully irritating and depressing force, at least at the outset. The implications of that are too complex to understand all at once.)

This is basically a one-joke movie. (You have already heard the joke.) It does have some clever moments, but it is basically a television show (in fact, it is basically The Smothers Brothers Show) on a larger screen. The only unusual aspect of the film is that after repeated attempts have been made to ensnare him in the corporate life, Smothers escapes into being an itinerant magician by saying "poof" on the 23rd floor of Century City, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

His transformation is so magical and unreal, though, that he might as well not have escaped. The parts of the film that show how he was lured into the corporate world again have some realism, so we might as well think that the "poof" episode is just his daydream and that Smothers is still stuck at Century City. At the very least, the final scenes show that except by supernatural forces, one cannot escape the corporate, work-a-day world.

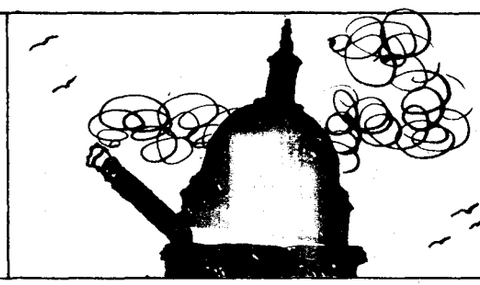
What is the bottom line? What conclusions can be drawn from all of this about the state of American life? Are we in the last stages of our own Weimar Republic?

Perhaps, but you cannot prove it by the movies. The real lesson of the movies is their artificiality and lack of touch with real life. It is not blind coincidence that every one of the stories takes place in Los Angeles. By placing the locale in fantasyland, they have placed it either everywhere or nowhere. And the stilted, lifeless stories tell us which.

In each story the escape takes on the most superficial form—travel, change of clothing, fantasy-change of occupation. Also in each, the "oppression" which compels the flight is superficial and cheap—a job, a boring husband, too much responsibility. All of those are real forces, but breezes compared to the hurricanes of self-generated feelings of entrapment which real life spawn. The return to earth is also flagged without subtlety in all three—murder, return to hubby, corporate responsibilities.

The stories are simply the modern equivalent of fairy tales—movies which could and should be television shows. They bear the hideous birthmark of the television show: no development of character, no direction, no acting—in a word, radio with pictures. That is the most serious historical lesson that can be drawn from these movies. Television shows, like the Body Snatchers, are among us in the guise of movies. □

Letter from a Whig



by C. Bascom Slemp

The Fortieth Vice President

(WASHINGTON)—House Minority Leader Gerald Ford (R-Mich.) was sworn in as the fortieth Vice President of the United States on December 6, after the Senate had confirmed Ford's nomination with only three dissenting votes, and the House with a vote of 387 to 35. On the same day the White House revealed that its Operation Candor was to reach even greater speculative heights with what one Administration spokesman called the "devil's theory." And pressures once again began to mount for Nixon to resign or be impeached.

Ford Confirmed

After what was billed as the most detailed probe ever undertaken of a public official, Gerald Ford remained untainted. Many of Ford's ideological opponents, including freshman Democratic Congressman Gerry Studds (who has the distinction of representing the only one of Massachusetts' twelve congressional districts carried by Nixon in 1972), were willing to concede that under the Twenty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution it was not their responsibility to judge a vice-presidential candidate by his philosophy. Of course, not all liberal Democrats were so magnanimous, and the attempt by some left-wing ideologues to thwart Ford's nomination raised concern among at least one conservative Republican legislator that the inevitable result of this effort would be a policy of appeasement on the part of Ford, once confirmed Vice President.

The *Congressional Record* of December 6 was replete with praise (and occasional criticism) of Ford. Some was serious, and some was intended to be serious. Thus it fell to Louisiana's one and only John Rarick (D-La.) to raise the right-wing doubts of Ford's credibility. Rarick questioned Ford's association with the Bilderberg group, which as we all know is "a secret international association of the rich and super rich." The Louisiana congressman attempted to discern the implications of Ford's friendship "with these international kingmakers," but he was unable to muster much congressional support for his position. Consequently, during a Joint Session of Congress, Gerald R. Ford—Mr. "Energetic, Responsible, Able, Loyal, Decent, Reliable, Fair, Optimistic, Respected, and Dedicated"—was sworn in as Vice President amidst pomp and ceremony. He is now said to be the odds-on favorite for the 1976 presidential nomination among congressional Republicans, who perhaps wish to exonerate themselves of the fabled "arrogance" of their party's current executive office-holder.

The Devil Made Me Do It

On the day of Ford's swearing in, Alexander Haig, Jr., who handed in his resignation as full general to assume the White House position as Chief of Staff, testified in Federal Court on December 6 that he and the President's lawyers had been concerned that "some sinister force" was responsible for the eighteen-minute erasure of the June 20, 1972 Watergate tape. Haig had no explanation for what the "sinister force" might be, but this latest theory caused at least one GOP congressman to question aloud whether the White House position was merely a parody of Geraldine's—"The devil made me do it!"

GOP Succession Set

Now that the GOP line of succession is once again firmly established, the question of impeachment or forced resignation has surfaced quickly among Republicans. Since White House staffers Laird and Harlow have indicated that their departure is imminent (both men have shown a healthy eagerness to leave the White House, though neither wanted to leave before the Ford confirmation), a rocky road still lies ahead for Nixon. But Jimmy the Greek is not yet giving odds and there aren't many in Washington willing to take a gamble at this point.

No Early Recess

Earlier in the year Congress had hoped

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for an early recess and most of the members have been waiting eagerly to get back to their constituents. Reelection jitters are widespread. But the Ford nomination had kept Congress in session, as had the energy crisis. Mandatory fuel allocation programs are discussed interminably, but Congress is still not too eager to meet some of the real sources of the problem. Thus rationing is preferred over market-clearing prices for gasoline, and further control of the wellhead price of natural gas over the deregulation of the product.

Washington Humor

Even in the midst of crises, however, Washington is not without its humor. In a letter to his colleagues John Erlenborn (R-Ill.) stated the need for a new minimum wage bill in no uncertain poetic terms:

". . . John Dent's (D-Pa.) 'Ode to Erlenborn' came across my desk last week . . . [and] a thought occurred to me. Maybe my pleas in poem and song for action on the minimum wage bill have been misdirected.

"After all, our Subcommittee Chairman is an experienced legislator. He knows the importance of compomise in the legislative process. He knows that, as troubled as the American people are about matters which come under the heading of Watergate, most are still concerned about their pocketbooks.

"He knows, too, that men and women at the low end of the wage scales deserve the time it would take for Congress to pass a good minimum wage bill. And he knows that, as a subcommittee, we have had nothing at all on our agenda for the past two months.

"In light of this, I'm confident that our Chairman would provide for early action on this bill if he were free to do so. But we all know the great influence exercised by the leaders of Organized Labor on the majority of the Education and Labor Committee. So again, resorting to simple rhyme, let me suggest:

John, John, he's our man—
If he can't do it, Georgie can!
"(And, if he won't, he's a real meany!)"

Ever wondered how your congressman justifies his existence? □

Special Editorial

Fissures in the Free World

Dr. Franz Josef Strauss, the leader of West Germany's opposition party, the Christian Socialist Union (CSU), recently paid an informal visit to the United States. A member of the German Bundestag (Parliament) since 1948, Strauss has held a number of major positions in the German government, among which were Minister of Finance and Federal Defense Minister.

Strauss' visit to the nation's capital, during which time he met with leading congressional figures and their staff assistants, as well as key Administration officials, including Secretary of State Kissinger, and Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, came at a time when a political storm in West Germany had erupted.

The political turmoil in West Germany was the result of a visit to Moscow this past October by Herbert Wehner, the parliamentary leader of the governing Social Democratic Party. During this visit, Wehner had set off a trial balloon by arguing that his (Bonn) government had "pushed too hard" for concessions from the Soviet Union in its 1971 agreement on West Berlin. (This agreement supposedly gave the West German government the "formal" right to represent the residents of West Berlin.) The agreement was considered necessary because the Soviet Union has consistently avoided any formal recognition of West Berlin's ties to West Germany. West Berlin's status was also tenuous because the East German government, carefully controlled from Moscow, has made East Berlin its capital and it has always claimed to be the legal heir to the city's western sector.

Berlin, as a result of the post-World War II Four Power Agreement, lies one hundred miles within the Soviet-occupied part of Germany, and is divided into four sectors. These sectors are occupied by the Soviet Union (East Berlin), the United States, Britain, and France (West Berlin). Because of the city's geographical vulnerability, the Soviet Union has consistently attempted to undermine West Berlin's ties to the West and over the course of the last twenty-five years, Berlin has repeatedly been a pawn for Soviet ambitions. Thus Wehner's Moscow statement represented an attempt to weaken Bonn's claim to West Berlin and strengthen the Soviet position.

Wehner's move was carefully calculated. Nevertheless, his statement received no public response from the United States government (which under the Four Power Agreement is responsible for guaranteeing the integrity of West Berlin with its western allies), and with the exception of the *New York Times*, the Wehner statement received no press coverage in this country. Dr. Strauss' visit to Washington was consequently of major importance.

Strauss warned U.S. officials not to get caught up in believing their own euphoric rhetoric of the détente spirit. He asked the government officials he met with to carefully question the motives behind the Soviet initiatives in bringing about a sense of relaxation to global politics, and he also discussed the implications of Wehner's statement.

Unknown to most Americans is the fact that Brandt, the internationally acclaimed West German Chancellor and leader of the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD), is not much more than the figurehead of respectability for his party. The man who controls the majority of the SPD is none other than Herbert Wehner, a former communist who lived in the Soviet Union during much of World War II. Wehner's wing of the SPD is composed of left-wing radicals who want nothing less than the dissolution of the western alliance system and neutralism for West Germany. This, in effect, would mean the "Finlandization" of the continent. As such, Europe would fall under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and would consequently be forced to coordinate its foreign policies with the Kremlin.

As Strauss pointed out, this is not a new goal for the left-wing elements of the SPD. To illustrate his point, Strauss discussed an article by Walter Hahn (an Associate Director of the Foreign Policy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, who is currently residing in Bonn doing research), which appeared in the defense and foreign policy journal *Orbis* this year. In this article Hahn traced the origins of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, the architect of which is Brandt's Special Minister, Egon Bahr. Hahn had conducted an interview with Bahr in 1969, during which Bahr outlined his ideas for future German policy. In retrospect, these ideas are notable because they are being translated into policy under the Brandt government. This includes the signing of the renunciation of force treaty, the *de jure* recognition of the two Germanies, the formal acceptance of the Soviet control over Eastern Europe, and the withdrawal of troops from both sides of the European alliance systems. Since all of these goals have been accomplished, or are in the process of being accomplished, grave concern is being increasingly voiced by German opposition party officials that the next logical step in the Wehner-Bahr policy will be the dissolution of the NATO alliance. This fear is compounded by the fact that Brandt was unable to solicit Wehner to retract (or modify) his Moscow statement, even after popular opposition to his position became evident. More recently the Wehner-Bahr coalition reasserted itself when Bonn rescheduled its normalization talks with Prague despite the deadlock over the status of Berlin. And once again it was Brandt who acquiesced and permitted the question to be taken off the diplomatic agenda. Thus for the city of Berlin, at least, détente has come to mean increasing apprehension over the integrity of its ties to the West.

While no one believes that the left wing of the SPD will be able to implement its policies today or tomorrow, Strauss warned of a possible gradual erosion process, and he indicated that the sentiment for such a policy is strong among the ever-growing radical factions of the SPD.

His visit to the United States, which went by largely unnoticed, should serve us all as a reminder that America and its allies are faced with growing differences and very serious security problems, the glowing rhetoric of détente notwithstanding.

Peter Hughes

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Correspondence

To the Editor:

I certainly concur with Governor Reagan's welfare reforms. More money should go to needy persons and the gulls should be cut off. One shortcoming of Mr. A. Lawrence Chickering's article strikes me. He does not mention that 90 percent of welfare cost goes to administration. A sociologist, employed by the federal government, told me that the best cost ratio in his experience was 75 percent. Needy persons are the social part of social science; sociologists are the science part; they get the money. Why are these facts never expounded?

Phillip A. Hoon
San Francisco, California

To the Editor:

Your magazine is witty, intelligent, and a slap on the back for "McSorley's old ale house."

Norman Stowe
Vancouver, British Columbia

To the Editor:

Responding to your tragi-comic solicitation for Christmas subscriptions, let me request first a Christmas subscription for myself; same seems appropriate, since you suggest bringing ". . . a little cheer into someone's life . . ." and since there is no one for whom I regard cheer as more important than for me.

Secondly, permit me to request a Christmas subscription for my esteemed brother and unsuccessful candidate as Republican for the Municipal Judgeship of _____. Brother Cy can use a subscription to *The Alternative* since he is apparently making prodigious amounts of money practicing law and did not intend to do so. Hence, his former occasions for dipping into issues of *The Alternative* have given way to dipping into escrow accounts and perhaps the till in general. It is my hope that the discipline of a regular arrival of an issue of *The Alternative* can restore him to his former disdain for giant amounts of money—a disdain that members of our family have cherished greatly since 1929.

. . . I wish you, yours, your progeny, your staff, your flora and fauna, and your friends the very warmest yuletide greeting.

Jerry W. Gerde
Panama City, Florida

To the Editor:

I note of late that *The Alternative* of late has compared the great Nixon to the Great Gatsby with perhaps some justification. It hasn't been too lenient with Agnew either with perhaps some justification, but, perhaps there is another side to ethics questions when they involve conservatives.

First of all let me state than I am a conservative, pro-American, and young. I have youth's impatience with the errors of the old—especially with those in government who have caused the present debacle of scandals. But there seems to be a relatively high percentage of "scandals" involving anti-Communists. Consider:

In 1947 Rep. J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee, was jailed for finagling with the payroll of his office staff.

Sen. Dodd, 100 percent anti-Communist, was censured by the Senate for using money raised in testimonial dinners for personal purposes, even though the contributors intended that he could use it for personal reasons!

Ronald Reagan must be nearly all-perfect! I remember only someone on television mentioning that he had once been brought in to a police station as a teenager with no record. Drew Pearson stated that he dismissed two of his aides because they were homosexuals. (But when an LBJ aide, who might have been blackmailed, was discovered in October 1969 as a homosexual the matter was glossed over.)

Speaking of LBJ: he was never brought to trial for the Baker and Estes cases nor were there cries for impeachment, and he certainly must have made a lot of money in politics, more than Agnew made on any land deal.

The point of all this (and it would make a good outline for an article for someone) is that conservatives must be perfect, or they will be discovered (and maybe Barry Goldwater must be perfect, ethics-wise).

N. James Russell
Newark, New Jersey

To the Editor:

I take as my point of departure your correspondence from the Rev. Gerard F. Yates, in the December issue. "Please try to tighten up on your writing." Indeed. And the best example of this journalistic shortcoming appeared in that very issue. I refer to Mr. van den Haag's article on college grade inflation. The prose was slovenly (take note of all the instances in which the learned professor takes to task the poor quality of college teachers: then note the number of sentences begun with the words "This is . . .," surely one of the weakest and misleading ways to begin any statement). The logic escaped me as I am sure it did others (it's just a bit too cute to state that the fact that teachers in general do not fail the majority of students in a class somehow tends to discount the argument for open admissions based on the projected dropping out of incapable students). And I could go on and on.

Anyone who has either taught or been taught in college in the past five years has some realization of the widespread problem of grade inflation. And lately many people are beginning to realize that an undergraduate degree has little practical relation to the occupation youth gradually aspires to. Nor does that degree tend in any significant way to cultivate a more civil, more virtuous populace. But the fault here is not entirely to be placed on the colleges themselves for the same reason that the shortcomings of the public schools ought not to be placed exclusively with the elementary and secondary educators. Education involves the whole country, for better or worse. And the problem with grade inflation will not be changed for the better until students, teachers *and* parents begin to understand that education is worked for and won. Being no professor, I don't propose an ideal method to work out my notions. I'm only suggesting that Mr. van den Haag is far too simplistic about the very real problem he claims to scrutinize.

Steven Finer
Needham, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

Edith Efron's letter in the December "Correspondence" section was a welcome sight, and a relief from the frequent hysteria which letters-to-the-editor often reveal. In typifying the asinine "rejoinders" of Messrs. "Randolph" and Veal, and the, I fervently hope, momentary lapse of good sense on the part of my good friend Chris Simonds, as the yelpings of "bully boys," Miss Efron hit the issue squarely. The tenor of her letter is perfect, and her call at the end for decency does in a few words what I took pages trying (probably unsuccessfully, if I judge things rightly) to do. If only people would stop treating people who differ as if they were lepers, we might get on with the legitimate business of society, which is to expand the realm of individual freedom. One small point, however. Miss Efron errs in remembering calls on my part for the censoring of "Maude." In fact, I wrote in my newspaper column and elsewhere for exactly the reverse, which is the continued freedom of the broadcast media to explore a variety of issues. I did call, though, for the networks to give some hard thought to broadcasting the opposite side of such touchy issues as "Maude" and her pro-abortion stance. And on the CBS affiliate in Boston at which I work as a commentator, I called on the air for a chastisement of that station for not airing the two pro-abortion "Maude" programs, even though I heartily oppose abortion. As for that issue, it is not so clear-cut as Miss Efron's letter indicates, and as she realizes too. Briefly, my position on abortion: it is wrong, it is the killing of human life, it is the proper function of government to protect innocents against unsought physical aggression, including murder, in this case fetus-murder, that is: feticide. But enough on that for now. The main point is this: huzzah to *The Alternative* for publishing the sanest letter-to-the-editor it has received, and published, in years.

David Brudnoy
Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

R. Emmett Tyrrell's overview of the intellectuals' relationship to bourgeois America was a refreshing treatment of a subject too often ignored by the rightist press.

Unfortunately, however, he drew the same mistaken conclusion other right-of-center publicist-thinkers have drawn, namely, that "our own liberal capitalism, our bourgeois state, are inimical to intellectuals."

The fact is, liberal democracy was the product of bourgeois intellectuals, and it remains the single most important factor for the care and feeding of that species. Nothing is more bourgeois than Gore Vidal, after negotiating a fat contract with his publisher, flying to his villa in Rome. The intellectuals' seduction by anti-capitalist ideology indicates decadence, not anti-bourgeois sentiment.

If American intellectuals were truly anti-bourgeois, they would burn their European villas, give their wardrobes to the poor, and forswear champagne and caviar. But the mark of the true bourgeois is his love of comfort and luxury: and this the intellectual of the modern age will not voluntarily surrender.

His "socialism" is mere claptrap, a device to make money, sell books, and win prestige. In short, his anti-capitalist prattle is simply the means by which he may emulate the capitalists through socially acceptable channels. He is at once hypocrite and scoundrel, but never, never, anti-bourgeois.

He is in fact the very soul of the modern big-city elites, for the media is his handmaiden: he writes the books, plays, and movies that titillate urban man; he is the rationalist *par excellence* who tells newspaper readers what to believe and what to ridicule.

In any case, keep up the good work.

Jerry Woodruff
Dearborn, Michigan

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Sen. James L. Buckley
Sen. Harry F. Byrd
John Chamberlain
Rep. Phil Crane
Ralph de Toledano
Edith Efron
M. Stanton Evans
Lawrence Fertig
Rep. Gerald Ford
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Anthony Harrigan
Jeffrey Hart
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Henry Hazlitt
Sen. Henry M. Jackson
Jenkin Lloyd Jones
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Phyllis Schlafly
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Sen. Strom Thurmond
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Alice Widener

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- WATERGATE AND NIXON'S CREDIBILITY
- NEW DRIVE FOR ANTI-BUSING AMENDMENT
- EVIDENCE CONFIRMS RED CHINA DOPE TRAFFIC
- SECRET REPORT SHOWS SCANDALOUS O.E.O. WASTE
- RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION CONTINUES IN U.S.S.R.
- REVOLUTIONARIES' SECRET BOMB FACTORIES
- THE STATE OF CONSERVATISM
- GUN CONTROL NOT THE ANSWER
- THE ZEALOTS BEHIND AMNESTY CAMPAIGN
- AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU
- UNION TERRORISM RAGES THROUGH NATION
- DEATH PENALTY ISSUE IS STILL ALIVE
- FREE ENTERPRISE CHALLENGES U.S. MAILS
- TEDDY KENNEDY'S DOUBLE STANDARD
- HOW WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES BACKS TERRORISM
- AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SCHMITZ

The list could go on for pages. As you can see, HUMAN EVENTS corrects the facts and unscrambles the interpretations offered by the liberal media. HUMAN EVENTS gives you the insights that make people hang on your words—in *any* gathering.

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Liberal magazines, with editorial budgets much bigger than ours, nonetheless pour through HUMAN EVENTS every week for facts which we learn from our exclusive sources. Again and again, stories first appearing in HUMAN EVENTS appear a week or two later in the mass media. Here is what a few Liberals have written about us:

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—*Newsweek*, **Sept. 6, 1971**

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—Cabell Phillips in the *New York Times*

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"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad"— Euripedes

Current Wisdom

SNAKE OIL

From the redoubtable Publishers Weekly comes an exquisitely written review that just might conduce to a startling new cure for viral pneumonia:

President Nixon's Psychiatric Profile, Eli S. Chesen, M.D. and Peter H. Wyden (McKay, dist.), $6.95

The young psychiatrist-author of *Religion May Be Hazardous to Your Health* scarcely goes beyond what the well-read Nixon-watcher may have come to observe on his own in this year of the Watergate exposures. Written in layman's language, clearly but not eloquently, his book is interesting and valuable nonetheless. From his own observations and his readings of *Six Crises* and the well-known books by Mazo, de Toledano, Evans and Novak, Mazlish and others, he draws a plausible profile of Nixon as, broadly, an obsessive-compulsive personality driven to extremes of privacy—a "submarine effect"—and a need to control himself and his environment virtually absolutely. Much that he says labors the obvious: but his fresher insights—the White House "plumbers" as an extension of Nixon's personality. Senator Ervin's unconscious role as a threatening father-figure possibly precipitating Nixon's viral pneumonia last summer—are useful.

—Publishers Weekly
November 12, 1973

CRISIS FOR PROFIT

An intriguing glimpse at how one of the most bloodthirsty nations on earth trains its fighting forces:

The Navy has suspended a pilot race relations program, in part because it was decided that the emotions of the participants had been rubbed too raw to continue.

Accounts vary, but the black civilian organizer of the program says a Navy admiral objected to demonstrations designed to deliberately arouse latent prejudices among both blacks and whites.

Charles H. King Jr., who heads Urban Crisis, Inc., of Dayton, Ohio, said he had kissed a white female assistant during the training program at the Naval base in Charleston, S.C.

The act drew a protest from an irate woman participant, Mr. King says, and the Navy suspended the program.

—New York Times

THE AMERICAN CONDITION

During the Nixonian Era a local gazette chronicles a typical American scene:

John L. Moale, a retired forman for the old Martin Company, died unexpectedly yesterday, apparently of a heart attack at the home of his tax accountant.

—Baltimore Morning Sun

THE OLD JOURNALISM

The king's English as written in the literary capital of Hoosierland:

City Police Inspector Howard Wilson advised local doctors to be aware of suspicious suspects. . . .

—Bloomington Herald Telephone

RETURN OF THE GARDYLOO

Another startling statistic revealed in the renowned Evansville Press serving that cosmopolitan city thereof, herewith:

I wish people would bear in mind that 50 percent of all the physicians now practicing medicine graduated in the bottom half of their class.

—Evansville Press

CATNIP

From the intellectual pages of the New York Review of Books, another blowzy apothegm for the Left's commonplace book:

Paradoxically, fascist minded Americans tend to admire communist societies once they actually visit them. The Nixons and the Agnews particularly delight in the absence of dissent; not to mention the finality of all social arrangements.

—New York Review of Books

BELLES LETTRES

Elegant moment of modern political philosophy from Theodore H. White, Visigoth:

Always hitherto, in all cultures, at all times in history, the fruit of a woman's coupling had been legislated by males, and most frequently by elderly males shriveled in the groin.

—The Making of the President 1972

THE FUTURE OF INTELLIGENCE

A brief look into the future of the healing art from the journal for five and dime intellectuals, Newsweek:

So the answer to black IQ scores may lie only partly in rectifying the ghetto environment, and partly in looking again at the narrow academic conceptualization of intelligence that insists—without outside empirical justification—on the supremacy of IQ. This will happen organically in a free society as blacks, with their possibly different modes of perception, push the old orthodoxies aside and help establish new, broader norms of intelligence. The process has already begun, in fact, with programs of open enrollment. The day may yet come when the pendulum swings the other way, and whites won't get into medical school because they score 15 points below the then-fashionable norm on Soul.

—Newsweek

AN AMERICAN DREAM

A knowledgeable reader of the Chicago Daily News proffers a suggestion worthy of sober consideration:

The death of Lyndon Johnson last January left us without a living former President; this is now the longest period in this century that we have been without a living former President.

It is Mr. Nixon's patriotic duty to resign at once so that this important position can be filled without further delay.

—Chicago Daily News

CLOCKWORK ORANGE REVISITED

A report on the care and feeding of dirty old men in the enlightened state of Connecticut:

A dozen convicted child molesters at Somers Correctional Institute are participating voluntarily in a program designed to reform them through electric shocks.

Dr. Dominic Morino, chief of the prison's mental hygiene unit, told the Hartford Courant that the shock therapy produces feelings of anxiety whenever an inmate thinks of a child as a sexual object.

The conditioning process, he said, occurs subtly. It completely removes the patient's desire to have sexual contact with children, but it does not affect his desire for normal sexual relationships.

The treatment involves slides of nude children and adult women flashed on a screen, he said. Every slide of a nude child is accompanied by a painful electric shock. There is no shock when slides of nude women appear.

—Washington Post

THE NEW COUGHLIN

Christian compassion as shown by one of the holy men of New Age Christianity, the gentle Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.:

The dream of Israel has become a nightmare. Israel has not abolished poverty and misery, rather she manufactures human waste, the by-products of her entrepreneurs, her military-industrial complex . . . she has expanded the prison system, perfected her espionage, exported on the world market that expensive blood-ridden commodity, the savage triumph of the technologized West: violence and the tools of violence . . . In Israel, the democratic formula is twisted out of all recognition; the citizens exist for the well-being of the state; it follows, as the imperialist corollary, that that measure of terrorism and violence and murder is applied to dissidents as shall guarantee the "well-being of the state . . ."

—address to the Association of Arab University Graduates
October 19, 1973

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CONTINUING CRISIS

(continued from page 2)

Ark.) was arrested for scuffling with police at National Airport. Guru Maharaj Ji was charged with smuggling $46 worth of jewelry, watches, and currency into India, and authoress Xaviera Hollander, whose *The Happy Hooker* remains the most serious literary work to enter the Best Seller List in the 1970s, has been nabbed for shoplifting in Vancouver, British Columbia.

● Patriots and votaries of high culture alike are still saluting the Cleveland Orchestra for breaking an airline beer-wine-liquor consumption record on a flight from Honolulu to New Zealand. Not only did they down prodigious quantities, but they outguzzled a large contingent from the Australian Army. Happy Days, Gentlemen! And speaking of Australia, sixteen strippers from Sydney's Kings Cross district have gone on strike and refuse to exuviate until work conditions are improved. Their action has the support of the State Labor Council and the local progressive clergy. By the end of the month tensions were easing in the Middle East, though Mohammed Touni, that Libyan skyjacker who took a Lebanese airliner to Israel in August "to show that not all Arabs hate the Jews" was immured in a Tel Aviv mental hospital. Secretary of State Kissinger spent most of the month in the air and the rest dulcifying Arabs and Israelis. But he did get them to their Geneva peace talks, and by the end of the month prospects for peace in the area were better. Nevertheless a mob of Swedish idealists protested the presentation of one-half of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Kissinger. Late in the month assorted sheiks and Abduls gathered to announce still more exorbitant prices for oil and the continuation of the oil boycott against the United States and others who do not share their foreign policy aspirations. And back in Chicago, Illinois, Ms. Bernice Flunton Bombfelter picketed the Marshall Field department store for having a male Santa Claus.

● America's moral decline continues unabated. Mrs. Johnnie Lee Fegion, 100, is leaving her one-hundred-three-year-old husband because "he spends all his time and money on other women." In Detroit Mr. Algene Choate is suing the school board for forcing his son "to eat a sandwich with an abnormally large amount of mustard on it." Even more suggestive news came from the Treasury Department which seized one million dollars of contraband bull semen from an American who had smuggled the hot stuff from Canada. Still the most dispiriting news of all came from Washington where Mr. Ralph Nader's top lawyer, Mr. William Dobrovir, admitted to having played one of the White House tapes—one that Nader had gotten by subpoena—at a Georgetown cocktail party. Think of it! America burns and even Nader's Raiders go drinking! Where will it all end? □

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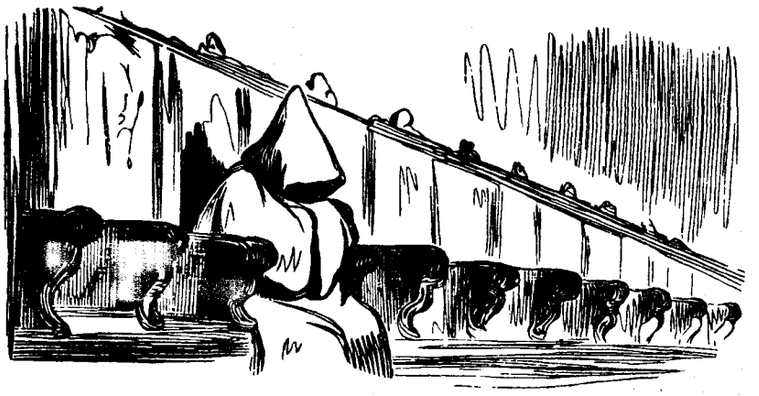

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